



# Biosecurity measures which help protect your herd against TB

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active landscape valued by everyone.*



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)



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## Why does TB eradication matter?

Our aim is to eradicate TB in cattle in Northern Ireland. We have a comprehensive Eradication Programme in place. The Programme helps protect human and animal health and crucially underpins our meat and dairy export trade which is a vital part of our local economy.

## Why does TB biosecurity matter?

Good biosecurity can help **you** keep TB out of **your** herd.

TB is a complex disease and in order to progress towards eradication we must all play our part. Steps taken at farm level are crucial to the success of the TB Programme and will help protect your herd from TB. Many of the recommended measures are relatively simple and inexpensive so can be easily implemented on your farm. Crucially ensuring you have good biosecurity protocols in place will also help protect your herd from productivity loss from many other diseases.

This leaflet is intended to provide a brief summary of the most likely ways TB infection can enter a herd and provide a starting point for you in considering how these risks can be reduced.

Not all the recommended measures will be practical or possible on all farms **but remember anything you can do to reduce the risk is better than doing nothing.**

There are  
**5**  
main ways TB  
can get into  
your herd

1. By buying in cattle from other herds.
2. By contact with cattle from neighbouring herds.
3. Via infected wildlife (badgers or deer)
4. By bringing in slurry or farmyard manure from other farms
5. Indirectly via people or equipment



## 1 Reducing the risk from buying in cattle

The best way to avoid buying in infected stock is to maintain a completely closed herd. If this is not possible on your farm you should still consider the following ways to reduce the risk of buying in infected cattle. **(Remember putting in place any risk reduction is always better than doing nothing!)**

- Breed as many of your own replacements as possible.
- Buy in as few as possible and from as few herds as possible.
- Consider buying stock directly off farm rather than via a market.
- Buy from lower risk herds (ideally herds you know the history of and which either operate as closed herds or have been free of TB for as long as possible). **Ask** sellers about the TB history of their herd.
- Consider buying younger cattle (e.g. calves are less risky than stores or finishing cattle)
- Consider asking seller to pre-movement test the animals
- Ensure any transport used is cleaned and disinfected before and after use.
- Isolate newly purchased stock. Ideally they should not mix with the rest of your herd until they have been TB tested at least 6 weeks after purchase. This can be done as part of a herd test or you can arrange a private test with your own vet.

## 2 Reducing the risk of spread from neighbouring herds

- Ensure your fencing is stock proof to prevent cattle breaking onto or off your land.
- Ideally farm boundaries should be “double fenced” with at least a 2m gap. As a minimum the boundary should prevent “nose to nose” contact.

- Avoid borrowing or hiring bulls - consider purchasing a bull or use of AI instead.
- Avoid sharing winter housing.
- Consider which fields you graze and when to help keep your cattle away from the perimeter with grazing stock from neighbouring herds.
- Consider the risks associated with moving animals back into your herd from shows and sales - is it worth it?



### 3 Reducing the risk from wildlife

- Prevent badgers accessing cattle feed and water sources:
  - Keep feed stores closed off and area under feed bins free of spilled meal.
  - Avoid feeding meal on ground at pasture - use a raised trough.
  - Consider using a “badger proof trough” with an anti-climbing roll bar on the side.
  - If providing meal at grass via trough or creep feeder consider feeding in the morning so troughs are empty at night when badgers are out.



Credit: Newman's farm



- Hang lick buckets on a pole or stand to keep them out of reach to badgers or use an alternative means of Magnesium supplementation. Lick buckets should be at least 1 meter off the ground, ideally 1.2 metres.
- Raise water troughs in fields as high as the type of stock allows. (minimum 1 metre off ground).
- Consider putting electric fencing reels across the face of silos at night.



- Keep cattle away from badger setts and latrines.
- Actively check your grazing ground for badger setts and latrines. Temporary electric fencing is very useful for this - the purpose of the fencing is to keep cattle away without disrupting badger movement.



- Make your farmyard as inaccessible to badgers as possible.
- Consider closing off feed passages at night especially if concentrates are fed on top of silage.
- Consider if entry gates can be sheeted in or fitted with a rubber flap to prevent badgers getting underneath them or through them. (Gaps should not exceed 7.5cm in size).

- Silage bales placed tightly together in a row can make a good barrier to enclose open sides of yards.
- Avoid grazing fields or using round feeders on ground known to be frequented by wild deer.

**KEY POINTS:**

Due to their size and shape badgers can squeeze through very small gaps.  
(approx. 7.5 cm in diameter).

Badger exclusion measures do not need to be custom built or expensive. Look for the gaps and block them - homemade barriers can work very well.



Credit: Prof R. McDonald, FERA

**Solid Metal Gate**



Credit: Prof R. McDonald, FERA

**Roller Door**

**4 Reducing the risk from slurry and farmyard manure (FYM)**

- Avoid “importing” slurry and FYM from other farms if possible.
- TB bacteria can survive for long periods of time in animal waste.
- The longer the slurry or FYM can be stored before spreading the lower the risk will be.
- If waste cannot be stored for the recommended time then it should ideally be spread on arable ground or silage ground and if it must be spread on grazing ground then grazing should be delayed for as long as possible.
- Spreading should take place on a calm day with stock kept well away.



- Modern, precision methods of spreading such as injection pose least risk of dispersing infective material.



## 5 Reducing the risk from people and equipment

- Prevent unnecessary access and visitors to your farmyard.
- Ensure all visitors wear clean boots and clothing.
- Provide a disinfectant footbath at the entrance to your farmyard and ensure it is replenished regularly with a disinfectant approved by DAERA to kill TB.
- When disinfectant is used ensure it is made up at the correct dilution.
- Ensure only clean vehicles and equipment enter your premises and minimise use of shared equipment.
- Check equipment brought by visiting contractors (e.g. slurry spreaders, hoof paring crushes and livestock trailers) is clean before entry.
- Minimise your own contact with other stock and change clothing and footwear after visiting markets and other farms.

**Remember putting in place any risk reduction is always better than doing nothing!**

**For further advice and help in controlling your risk, please contact your PVP or your own Patch Vet through your local DVO.**

**Further information is also available on the DAERA website:  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)**



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