



## TB IN GOATS - REDUCING THE RISK IN SMALL HERDS

In 2008 TB was identified in a number of herds of Golden Guernsey goats and, in 2013, in two commercial herds of goats. The disease was spread between herds by the movement of apparently healthy goats. So after many years during which TB was considered to be of little significance to goat keepers with no reports of the disease in goats, it is now clear that TB may pose a significant threat to some herds.

The Goat Veterinary Society has recently issued guidelines to help reduce the risk of TB in commercial herds and the information contained in these guidelines is equally applicable to the smaller herd and should be read by all goat keepers <http://www.goatvetsoc.co.uk/goat-health/tuberculosis/>.

The guidelines emphasise that TB in goats is infectious and may spread easily when infected and non-infected goats are kept together in the same air space as infected goats cough and breathe out TB organisms into the environment. Although coughs in goats can be caused by a number of different organisms and goats attending shows often develop a mild respiratory disease, it is essential that goat keepers recognise that any goat with a cough could be infected with TB, particularly if:

- They are from areas of England and Wales where TB is endemic in cattle and thought to be endemic in badger populations
- They graze outside in areas where TB is likely to be present in badgers or cattle
- Badgers have access to food, bedding or hay stores
- They have attended shows with goats from areas where TB is endemic

The GVS guidelines discuss basic biosecurity principles for reducing the risk from badgers.

Introducing purchased goats into the herd:

The recent outbreaks of TB showed that the greatest risk of spreading the disease between herds is from the purchase of infected goats. Ideally, any goat being introduced from an area where TB is endemic should be tested for TB prior to movement, isolated for 8 weeks and then retested before being allowed to join the new herd. A period of isolation will also help reduce the risk of introducing other diseases into the herd and allow time for a faecal egg count to be made and deworming carried out where necessary.

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### Shows:

Cattle from infected annual testing areas must be tested for TB within 60 days of movement to a show if the cattle will be at the show for more than 24 hours and/or housed i.e. kept inside in any covered area with sides, which includes a tent or marquee. Although at present there is no requirement to test goats before they attend shows, TB in goats is easily spread under these conditions. Show secretaries should consider requiring goats from infected annual testing areas to be tested for TB before attending the show, although at present no test will detect an animal which has been recently infected and is incubating the disease. Any goat with a cough should be isolated immediately and sent home, together with all the goats from the same herd.

For further information on TB, contact one of the BGS veterinary surgeons (David Harwood - [davidvet@waitrose.com](mailto:davidvet@waitrose.com); John Matthews - [clarendonhouse@btinternet.com](mailto:clarendonhouse@btinternet.com))

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