

Changes to Cattle Tracing System (CTS) links and Sole Occupancy Authorities (SOAs)

Bovine TB Information Note 03/12

May 2012

What is a “CTS Link” and a SOA? Will the changes affect you?

CTS Links: In some circumstances a CPH number can be linked to another so that a cattle keeper does not have to report movements between their farm and another holding. This can be useful for the farmer who might, for example, share facilities with another farmer, and/or rent land for seasonal grazing.

SOAs: Sole Occupancy Authorities approved by AHVLA consist of a group of holdings under the same farm management and control. Movements among holdings within a SOA are not subject to the six day standstill restrictions that apply to livestock movements

If you have either of these arrangements you should read and keep this Information Note.

What is changing?

To support other specific TB control measures, from 1 July we will:

- Approve no new CTS links or renew existing links when they expire, if they include holdings in high AND low TB risk areas. Links between holdings in high TB risk areas (those with 1 or 2 yearly routine TB testing frequency) AND low TB risk areas (those with 3 or 4 yearly routine testing frequency) that do not currently have an expiry date will also be removed on a phased basis. Affected cattle keepers will be contacted by BCMS to discuss next steps including alternative options. This change will not prevent the movement of animals between holdings, but such movements will have to be reported to BCMS;
- Accept no new SOA applications or requests for the addition of new holdings to existing SOAs.

Looking further ahead it is possible that all CTS links and SOAs may be abolished if all of the Farming Regulation Task Force recommendations on simplifying livestock movement arrangements are implemented.

What will farmers need to do and when?

Affected farmers should prepare for these changes so that they can make adjustments to their business organisation or register temporary CPHs if appropriate.

Farmers thinking of setting up new CTS links from 1 July 2012 will need to consider the implications of these changes. You can check the testing intervals set for the holdings by entering the CPH numbers on the AHVLA website at:

<http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/about/tti.asp>.

Farmers with CTS links that include holdings in high AND low TB risk areas will have the following options from 1 July:

- **Option 1: the keepership changes when cattle are on rented grazing**
The keeper can agree that the landlord becomes the keeper of the resident cattle when they are on the rented grazing. Movements between the two holdings should be reported and recorded as for any routine movement of stock between farms, and all other relevant provisions observed, such as standstill, pre-movement testing etc.
- **Option 2: where keepers cannot, or choose not to, take Option 1 they should secure a temporary CPH for the land they wish to use**
RPA already provides guidance for cattle keepers on how to secure temporary CPHs. Keepers should contact the RPA Helpline for further advice on this option.
IMPORTANT: Keepers should allow sufficient time for the temporary CPH to be set up: this can take up to 10 working days.

If you require further advice or guidance please contact BCMS.

BCMS will contact cattle keepers who are likely to be affected, to provide information, at the time the change may impact them.

Why make changes?

The current rules for reporting and TB pre-movement testing of cattle moved among CTS linked holdings and SOA holdings are inconsistent and unhelpful from a TB control perspective.

These changes will help reduce disease risks. The changes will ensure more consistent movement reporting, help avoid confusion about pre-movement testing rules, and are in line with the Farming Regulation Task Force recommendations on CTS links and SOAs.

Q&A

What is a ‘high risk area’ and what is a ‘low risk area’?

For the purposes of these policy changes we have identified high TB risk areas as being those where routine TB testing is set at 1 or 2 year intervals and low TB risk areas as those where the routine TB test interval is set at 3 or 4 years. You can check the testing intervals for holdings by entering the CPH numbers on the AHVLA website at <http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/about/tti.asp>.

How will I know if this impacts me?

BCMS will contact cattle keepers who are likely to be affected, to provide information at the time the change may impact them.

I have CTS linked holdings in different TB risk areas – what do I do to make sure these changes don’t disrupt my business?

You have two main options as outlined above. You should choose the option which best suits your business organisation and activity and contact the BCMS Helpline when your link is due to expire.

You should contact the BCMS Helpline at least 2 weeks before cattle are due to move off the holding(s) where the existing CTS link will be removed, to allow the necessary changes to be registered on CTS and at AHVLA.

BCMS will contact you if your link has no expiry date to discuss options.

I have CTS linked holdings in areas subject to the same routine TB testing frequencies – am I affected?

No, you won’t be affected by these changes.

I have linked holdings spanning different TB risk areas, and the CTS link is open-ended. Will I be affected by this change *immediately*?

Not immediately but the approval of such links will be rescinded on a phased basis. BCMS will contact you when these links are being reviewed to discuss next steps.

What happens to my existing SOA?

You can retain your existing SOA, but the exemption from pre-movement testing for movements from holdings in high risk areas to holdings in low risk area will no longer be available, and you will no longer be allowed to add new holdings to your existing SOA. In all other respects your SOA, and the operational requirements associated with it, will be unchanged.

What happens to my sheep?

Existing SOAs carry on, although additional holdings cannot be added to your SOA.

Contacts

If you have any questions on how these changes will affect you, please contact one of the following:

BCMS Helpline: 0845 050 1234 (Mon-Fri 8am-5.30pm, Sat 9am-1pm)

Email: ctsonline@bcms.rpa.gsi.gov.uk

RPA Helpline: 0845 603 7777 (Mon-Fri 8:30 – 5pm) – Select the option regarding changes needed to your CPH or to get a new CPH

For information on SOAs, contact your **local AHVLA office**. Contact details are available at <http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/about/contact-us/index.htm>

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www.defra.gov.uk/animal-diseases/a-z/bovine-tb