**What is phased eradication?**

- It means we’re working with individual farmers and their industry organisations to completely get rid of *Mycoplasma bovis* from New Zealand’s dairy and beef herds over time.
- All herds with infected animals in them will be culled – on a timetable that works for the farmer – so long as we’re confident we have the disease locked down on that farm.
- This means, for example, if a farmer wants to milk through to a particular date, finish off beef animals or achieve some other farming or personal objective, then we will work with that.

**How long will it take?**

- We expect most of the job will be done in the next year or two.
- We’ll need to keep tracing animals, and testing animals and milk until our checks find no more cases of the disease.
- It could take 8–10 years before we can be confident we’ve finally got rid of the disease.

**What are the chances of success?**

- It is hard to say exactly. It’s a tricky disease to test for and there are animal movements we haven’t been able to track down. This makes eradication harder.
- However – at this stage we can see a connection between all infected properties and we only have one strain of the disease.
- The view of Government and your industry organisations was that we have just one chance to get rid of the disease and we should take it.

**Why do you cull all animals – even if they are not infected?**

- The disease can’t be reliably confirmed in individual animals.
- Seemingly healthy animals can still carry the infection and infect others. Clinical signs only appear when an animal is under stress of some sort.
- So – if we confirm the disease in one animal, for disease control purposes we have to assume the whole herd is infected and cull them all.

**What would happen if my farm comes under suspicion?**

- If our tracing of cattle from infected farms suggests you may be at risk, you’ll have a call from our casing team. They’ll ask questions about animals you’ve brought onto your farm and when.
The timing of movements may be enough to rule you out, but if not, someone will come to carry out blood tests on some of your animals.

Testing can take some weeks and there may need to be several rounds of tests to confirm the disease or freedom from it.

**What happens if my farm tests positive?**

- The confirmation of infection means controls on your farm would be strengthened to a Restricted Place Notice and all cattle will be culled – at a time that worked for you.
- Your own case manager (known as an Incident Control Point (ICP) Manager) would work with you on plans for your farm.
- The Rural Support Trust and your industry organisations are available to help.
- All your cattle will be culled according to the plan we agree with you.
- Your farm would be cleaned and disinfected (by a contractor and at our expense) and then it would need to be kept free of cattle for 60 days.
- You could then restock your farm and we would assist in planning that.
- Of course, financial compensation is available for culled cattle and partial payments can be made within a fortnight of any cull.

**What’s an IP, an RP and a NOD?**

- An Infected Property (or “IP”) is a farm where we have confirmed *Mycoplasma bovis* through a PCR (genetic) test. All cattle will be culled from these farms. Infected properties will be under legal controls known as a Restricted Place Notice.
- A Restricted Place (or “RP”) is a farm where there is either confirmed disease or a very high suspicion of disease. If not confirmed, RPs are likely to have had some test results indicating the disease and are waiting for final confirmation. Cattle and other risk goods (equipment, vehicles, farm equipment etc) cannot be moved on or off the farm without permission from MPI. Under the eradication programme, many RPs will be culled.
- A farm under a Notice of Direction (or “NoD”) is where we believe a risk event has occurred – such as a transfer of cattle from an infected or high-risk property. Testing is underway. Farms under a NoD cannot move cattle and risk goods off the farm. 70–80 percent of farms under a NoD prove to be negative and the controls are lifted.

**What’s the story with farms under surveillance but not movement controls?**

Some farms we regard as at relatively low risk may be placed under surveillance. This means we’re running further testing to confirm if there is any risk and whether they should be subject to movement controls.

**Why won’t you tell us where the infected farms or the suspect farms are?**

- We are not disclosing people’s names and other personal information due to privacy considerations.
- We could release information if it supported our biosecurity efforts – but at the moment we aren’t of that view because the risk is being managed through other measures like movement controls, surveillance and culling.
- We are concerned publishing names could be harmful to our effort to eradicate *Mycoplasma bovis*. It is important farmers can come forward and report suspected problems without fear of being exposed against their will. It is also critical that farmers under control can continue to trust MPI.
- We are committed to the privacy of these farmers – to protect their welfare and also the welfare of their families and their businesses. This approach is a key underpinning of our biosecurity system – for *Mycoplasma bovis* and other incursion responses.

**When did the disease get here?**

All the evidence we have is that *Mycoplasma bovis* arrived in New Zealand in late 2015 to early 2016. Although investigations are ongoing, we have two lots of evidence that support this – genetic analysis and modelling work carried out by the MPI Animal Health Laboratory in collaboration with the molecular epidemiology laboratory at Massey University; and our tracking and tracing activity. It is possible that new evidence will come to light. But right now, we have sound scientific evidence pointing to a likely entry date of late 2015 to early 2016.
Will the person who brought it into the country face repercussions?
Right now we do not know exactly how *Mycoplasma bovis* was introduced to New Zealand. While we continue to investigate how the disease got here – both through science and through compliance checks, we may never know how it got here or if any individual is responsible. We will continue to keep farmers informed of any developments in our investigations. A report on our early look at possible entry pathways is on the MPI website: mpi.govt.nz/bovis

Why didn’t you close Cook Strait to cattle movements when it was found in the South Island?
Closing Cook Strait would have required a particular legal control that has to be based on strong scientific justification. The risk of disease transfer across the Strait was assessed as low, and the imposition of controls would have created a disproportionate impact on normal farming activities. Imposing the control would also have created an impression internationally that New Zealand was dealing with a more serious biosecurity issue, creating a high risk of trade impacts. We now know that the disease was in the country for 18 months before we were aware of it and a significant number of risk cattle movements had already occurred between the North and South Islands during this time.

What advice can you give about buying stock?
- The infected farms and farms we know of that are under a material level of suspicion are in lock down – there is no danger of animals being moved from these farms without our knowledge.
- This includes farms under Notice of Direction – and remember, 70–80 percent of these farms end up testing clear.
- Do your homework about the original source of the cattle, their health history, and find out what milk was used when they were reared – whole milk or calf milk replacer.
- If you don’t like the answers, don’t buy.
- This advice applies to buying stock farm to farm or from a sale yard.
- Always apply good biosecurity measures when introducing new animals to your farm – like keeping them separate from the rest of the herd for a period to observe their health. Dairy NZ have a helpful pre-purchase checklist: https://bit.ly/2ysR7t9

How long can *Mycoplasma bovis* hang around outside of an animal?
- *Mycoplasma bovis* can survive outside of cows for very short periods.
- The disease breaks down within a matter of days when exposed to sunlight and fresh air. The bacterium does survive for slightly longer in moist environments. This is why we take a cautious approach of a 60 day stand down period between when a farm is depopulated and when a farmer can restock.

How can I protect my farm from my neighbours stock?
- Over the fence spread is not easy – we have seen no case in New Zealand to date.
- Work to keep cattle at least a paddock apart.
- Talk to each other and if your neighbour is grazing the boundary, keep your cattle back.
- Agree to use electric fence outriggers on each side of the boundary so there is no nose to nose contact. And again, talk to each other.

Can I purchase raw milk from a dairy farmer to rear calves?
- Feeding unpasteurised raw milk from cows infected with *Mycoplasma bovis* (or any mastitic or sick cow milk) is a high-risk activity.
- You should try to get some confidence the source herd is *Mycoplasma bovis*-free.
- Ask for the results of the recent bulk milk tests. In big calf rearing operations feeding whole milk, consider pasteurisation of the milk.
In smaller operations it is possible to treat the milk with citric acid. Taking it to a pH below 5 for at least 8 hours will kill *Mycoplasma bovis*, but below a pH of 4, the milk will be unpalatable and the calves will refuse to drink it. Our recommended target is 4. Full information is on our website and on DairyNZ’s website. You can also use calf milk replacer.

**What’s your advice on holding calf days?**

For this coming spring, we recommend against schools and clubs holding calf days. Bringing animals from different herds together does pose a risk of disease spread. While the risk is relatively low, we are in a critical phase for tracking down and eradicating *Mycoplasma bovis* and unnecessary mixing of animals at events like calf days should be avoided.

If schools and clubs do go ahead with events, ensure you have consulted with your communities and taken all sensible precautions. Our fact sheet has some simple precautions you can take to minimise the risks: [https://bit.ly/2ytnWq6](https://bit.ly/2ytnWq6)