



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

## APHA Briefing Note 40/24

# Interferon-gamma (IFNg) blood sampling in England pilot

**Date issued: 08 November 2024**

### Purpose

1. To inform Official Veterinarians (OVs), Authorised Tuberculin Testers (ATTs) and OV practices working in England of the imminent roll out of a pilot for the delivery of interferon-gamma (IFNg) TB blood sampling in England by a third-party provider.

### For information

1. The interferon-gamma (IFNg) TB blood test is a supplementary blood test conducted in TB breakdown herds alongside the tuberculin skin test to increase sensitivity of testing. IFNg testing is an integral part of the government's strategy to achieve officially TB free status for England by 2038.
2. Currently APHA carries out all statutory IFNg testing of herds in England. Blood samples are collected by APHA staff and submitted for testing at an APHA laboratory.
3. A pilot project to test the delivery of the blood sampling and sample dispatch elements of the process by a third-party provider is planned to go live on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
4. The aim is to provide APHA with additional capability and resilience. This would be particularly useful in the face of increased demand or pressure on resource during exotic notifiable disease outbreaks and other incidents.
5. As part of this pilot APHA will allocate a maximum of 28 IFNg tests to a group of 31 practices across all four Veterinary Delivery Partner (VDP) regions in England over a three-month period. The participating practices have already been confirmed.

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

6. The project team will review results on a fortnightly basis and will evaluate the pilot at the end of the project.

## Further Information

1. OV practices delivering TB testing in England under one of the VDPs should address any queries to the relevant VDP in the first instance who will collate and escalate to APHA as necessary.
2. OV instructions will be updated to include IFNg testing in England in due course.