Sampling specifications and ELISA blood test interpretation change

The *M. bovis* Programme is making changes to on-farm sampling, and how it interprets ELISA results. There is no impact on farmers already undergoing sampling and testing – the new specifications are being applied for sampling tasked from 26 August onwards.

A summary of these changes is provided below.

There is no direct impact on farmers from the change to how we interpret ELISA blood test results – however, farmers may find that the interpretation of their results is different from what they expected. It is important to note that while the method of interpretation has changed, the overall result for the property is highly likely to have been the same. A summary of these changes is provided below.

**Sampling specification and interpretation changes**

1. At-risk management group(s) will only require one round of negative herd-level serology (ELISA) to set the property status to negative for current risk event(s) if:
   a. There are no identified trace animals in the at-risk management group(s) at the time of round 1 sampling
      i. If there are trace animal(s) present during the first round of sampling, two negative rounds on herd-level serology with negative herd-level serology on trace animal(s) at slaughter will be required to set the property status to negative. If any positive herd-level serology results, two sequential rounds of negative herd-level serology will be required to set the property to negative.
   b. There are at least 40 animals in the group
      i. If there are less than 40 animals in any at-risk management group(s) a second negative round will be required on those groups composed of less than 40 cattle.

2. The number of cattle sampled will increase to 220 (instead of 100) for groups of ≤300 animals, and to 250 cattle for groups of >300 animals.

3. If a property tests positive on herd-level serology in their first round of sampling they will still require two subsequent negative rounds of herd-level serology for the current investigation to end.
   a. This scenario happens relatively infrequently – in the majority of instances properties where the first round of sampling produces a positive herd-level serology go on to become Confirmed Properties.

4. On-farm collection of milk samples for PCR testing will be discontinued because PCR testing of these samples over the last year has not produced Confirmed Properties that would not have otherwise been detected with herd-level serology.

5. On-farm collection of nasals swabs for PCR testing will only continue for live trace forward animals under a year of age.

6. On-farm collection of nasal swabs for PCR testing for all cattle apart from trace animals will be discontinued because PCR testing of these samples over the last year has not produced Confirmed
Properties that would not have otherwise been detected with herd-level serology.

7. Individual animals will be determined to be ‘Reactors’ at a higher level of reactivity than before (a SP ratio threshold of ≥90)

8. Management groups will be determined to have a positive herd-level serology result with a lower percentage of reactors than before, a cut-off point of (≥3%, rather than ≥10%)

9. There will be no ‘suspicious’ herd-level serology results – only negative or positive herd-level serology results.