



Bovine Brucellosis

Abortion Screening Pilot Project

From February through July 2020, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and participating [Canadian Animal Health Surveillance Network](#) (CAHSN) laboratories will conduct a pilot project to improve Canada's bovine brucellosis surveillance. Blood and tissue samples related to reproductive issues in cattle submitted to participating network laboratories during this time may be tested for brucellosis at a CFIA laboratory.

What is brucellosis?

Brucellosis is a disease caused by various species of *Brucella* bacteria. It is a contagious disease that can infect a variety of animal species including cattle and people. Clinical signs of brucellosis in cattle usually include late term abortion, retained placenta, reduced milk production and still-births or weak calves. Bovine brucellosis can spread from cattle to humans, most commonly through drinking infected raw milk or exposure to infected calving material (e.g. fetus, placenta).

Why is my animal being tested for brucellosis?

Bovine brucellosis (*Brucella abortus*) was once a concern for Canadian cattle producers, but was successfully eliminated from Canada's cattle population in the mid-1980s after a long eradication campaign. Bovine brucellosis is a reportable disease in Canada, meaning that anyone who suspects an animal has bovine brucellosis must immediately notify a [CFIA district veterinarian](#).

Brucellosis testing contributes to our national surveillance, which helps Canada secure and maintain international market access for our cattle and their products. Canadian cattle are already tested at abattoirs via the [Bovine Surveillance System](#) to support our claim of freedom from brucellosis. By targeting cattle with reproductive issues, we are improving the quality of our surveillance system and creating efficiencies by potentially reducing the number of samples tested at slaughter.

What happens if the brucellosis blood test is positive?

A positive brucellosis blood test may indicate a cross-reaction from another bacteria or exposure to *Brucella*. An investigation is required to follow up on any positive blood tests.

An investigation consists of an on-farm visit by the CFIA to take a blood sample from the suspect animal and collect information about the herd. Movement controls may be applied depending on the epidemiological situation. Additional samples may be taken from the herd for testing at a CFIA laboratory, if necessary.



What happens if the follow-up test results are positive?

A positive result on a follow up blood test may trigger further testing of the suspect animal and its herd. Depending on the situation, the suspect animal may be destroyed (with eligible compensation paid to the producer) for confirmatory testing by bacterial culture.

What happens if the tissue culture is positive?

Positive culture results confirm the animal is infected with *Brucella*. If an animal is confirmed to be infected, a variety of disease control measures may be used, including quarantine, testing and destruction of infected/exposed animals. Owners whose animals are ordered destroyed by the CFIA may be [eligible for compensation](#).

Can I opt out of this project?

Yes. Clearly indicate on the submission form that submitted samples are not to be considered for the pilot project.

Note: there is no charge for brucellosis testing at the CFIA laboratory as part of this pilot project. Personal information will not accompany samples submitted from the network laboratory to CFIA. However, as noted above, if test results warrant further investigation, CFIA will obtain information from the CAHSN laboratory to follow up with the producer.

For further information about this pilot project, please contact one of the CFIA district offices involved in this project:

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