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**Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead**

Ken Roy  
Head of Profession for Statistics, Defra Group  
Natural England  
(by email)

21 December 2017

Dear Ken

### **STATISTICS ON TUBERCULOSIS IN CATTLE IN GREAT BRITAIN**

We recently reviewed compliance of the [Quarterly TB in cattle in Great Britain](#) statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This letter summarises our findings.

Overall, this statistical release has many strengths. It is detailed and informative; it explains trends in the levels of bovine TB well and provides a lot of background material for users to help them understand the policy context and the methods used. You have made a lot of improvements and additions to the release since we carried out our assessment in 2012. For instance, you now publish a series of detailed [methodology and quality reports](#) alongside the main statistical release. The [Quality Assurance and Data Handbook](#) is particularly noteworthy; it covers many different aspects of the quality of the data, from the data sources, collection and management, to data analysis and revisions.

The release is clearly targeted at the expert, specialist user. This is not surprising given the complexity of the subject matter. You regularly meet with an expert user group that includes statisticians from the devolved administrations, epidemiologists, TB advisors and managers of the data system. As part of your ongoing developments, you may want to consider whether the content of the release could be made more accessible for wider use. For example, you could include a glossary with key definitions to help these users understand technical terms and include a high-level summary or overview of the cycle of bovine TB classification to convey how it is monitored.

The release contains some background information and a timeline of the bovine TB policies that have been implemented so far. The commentary could go further to convey *why* it is important to monitor the disease and prevent its spread, covering areas such as: what is the impact on cattle, on farming and the economy; and how do policy decisions affect the spread of the disease.

In addition to the quarterly statistical bulletin, you publish a shorter, monthly official statistics release. We welcome your ongoing review of the status of this monthly release, and your ongoing engagement with users about this.

We appreciate the positive way that the team engaged with us during this short review, and welcome the way that the statistics team looks to continually improve this product. I trust that this letter supports the team in its endeavours.

Yours sincerely



Mark Pont  
Assessment Programme Lead