

TB REPORTS

What is the Godfray report?

The Godfray report was a review of the government's 25 year bovine TB strategy, published in 2018. It concluded that the presence of infected badgers does pose a threat to local cattle herds, and that reducing the threat would help to lower the incidence of disease in cattle. It also highlighted the need for improved governance (including increased industry ownership), increased veterinary advice and support for farmers, refined testing protocols, research into DIVA tests (Differentiating Infected from Vaccinated Animals), support of genetic selection for higher resistance, improved surveillance and diagnostics, risk based trading, periodic culling of wildlife, research into badger vaccination, research into risks from slurry or manure spreading and a compulsory insurance programme.

EU Recommendations

The EU Commission's Directorate-General Health and Food Safety report in 2015 identified five broad issues which, collectively, were holding back progress in TB eradication in NI:

- ineffective implementation of some measures to stop disease transmission between cattle and between cattle and badgers, for example, controls on animal movements and biosecurity measures
- a need to increase the sensitivity of tests
- ineffective policies to clear up chronically infected herds and to understand and contain levels of infection in the badger population
- the absence of regular evaluation of the effectiveness of the eradication programme measures to define and adapt disease control strategies, and
- insufficient engagement and commitment of key stakeholders to the eradication programme.

NI reports

A TB Strategic Partnership Group developed a 'Bovine TB Eradication Strategy for NI' in 2016, advocating for partnership working, improved biosecurity, and compensation reform in tandem with wildlife intervention. The Strategy was not implemented, and a NI Public Accounts Committee report of 2018 strongly advocated a strategic approach to the control of bovine TB, with a focus on eradication of the disease, rather than containment alone.

The ensuing TB Eradication Partnership (TBEP) Report in 2019 recommended: revised governance of the programme, with partnership working, regional eradication partnerships and local disease response teams; effective action to deal with disease reservoirs in bovine and wildlife populations, and an enhanced role for veterinarians in assessing risks on farms and providing biosecurity advice.

A TB Partnership Steering Group Report (Blueprint for Eradication) in 2025 followed a review of bovine TB in NI by the Chief Veterinary Officer and created a framework of actions for the short, medium and long terms, to deal with changing the culture around bTB through people, partnership and science, cattle interventions, wildlife interventions, regionalisation and financial supports.