Guideline for manual inspection of high-risk tick carriers

This guideline supports the *'Procedure for tick free manual inspection of high-risk tick carriers'* and the *'Procedure for manual inspection of high-risk tick carriers free of adult cattle tick'* and describes techniques for manual inspection.

Completing a manual inspection

1. If the accredited certifier or person conducting the inspection normally wears glasses for reading, they should wear glasses whilst performing the inspection.

2. Restrain the high-risk tick carrier/s. For unled carriers, when loading the crush or race, heads should face away from the person inspecting, this is known as herringbone pattern. This will present the primary inspection sites for easy access.

3. Visually inspect for any obvious signs of cattle tick as you approach the carrier. Take note of any lumps, swellings, bumps and scabs on the skin that may need closer inspection.

4. When manually inspecting the two primary sites and one secondary site on each carrier, use fingertips to feel for ticks including any lumps, swellings, bumps and scabs on the skin.

Primary inspection sites

5. Tail butt – start at the butt of the tail. Use fingertips to turn the hair back on both sides and backwards down the tail for about 15-20cm. Pay close attention to the caudal fold.

6. Escutcheon – start at the vent down to the scrotum or udder as follows:

    - Using the fingertips, run the hand down the escutcheon, moving between the scrotum or udder and the inner hind leg.

    - Claw the fingers so as to have fingernails in contact with the high-risk carrier skin. A gentle back ward motion will remove any ticks, scabs, or shells felt with the fingertips.

    - Repeat this procedure 2-3 times on either side.

7. Ear – run thumbnail along the inside upper edge of the ear, inspect the whole ear, both inside and outside.

Secondary inspection sites

1. Dewlap – look at the whole of the dewlap facing you. The dewlap can be rolled between thumb and forefinger where it is practical to do so.

2. Upper neck – the upper neck is the area along the top line about 15–20 cm either side of the high point of the shoulder. Turn hair back, moving away from the head of the stock.

3. Point of elbow – at the point of the elbow grab the loose skin and pull back towards yourself to expose the underlying thin skin between the point of elbow and the ribs.

Remove any ticks, scabs or shells using fingernails, place in the palm of the hand for closer inspection.

Risk minimisation declaration by the owner/person in charge

The owner or person responsible for the high-risk carrier is responsible to present the animals to the standard required to meet the risk minimisation requirement. The owner may choose any method to achieve this standard.

The method chosen by the owner forms a key part of the assessment process and the accredited certifier should document the method.

A template declaration is available from Biosecurity Queensland, however other documents may be used by the accredited certifier to comply with the record keeping requirements in the *Procedure for Tick Free Manual Inspection of high-risk tick carriers.*

Chemical treatment

If a chemical treatment is chosen by the owner/person in charge, refer to *Guideline for the use of chemical treatment on cattle tick carriers*- (Treatment and re-treatment intervals).

Low risk tick environment

Keeping livestock in a low-risk tick environment can assist livestock to meet the risk minimisation requirements (RMRs) by not allowing ongoing infestations of the cattle from the non-parasitic life cycle stage of the cattle tick. Refer to the *Guideline for identifying cattle tick and the life cycle stages* – (Low-risk tick Environment).

This method relies on an understanding of the life cycle of the cattle tick, and it is important that owners/person in charge should be able to demonstrate that understanding.

If this method is chosen, the accredited certifier should take notice of the dates when the carriers entered the tick free environment and the time they have remained in the tick free environment.

On property biosecurity plan

Various on property management techniques can result in herds that have very low to nil cattle tick infestation levels. If a producer indicates they are using their on-property biosecurity plan to demonstrate they have met their general biosecurity obligation (GBO) and achieved the RMR, the accredited certifier should question the owner/person in charge as to their level of knowledge and understanding about how those management techniques have created a tick free environment.

If an owner declares they have used a biosecurity plan to achieve the RMR and cattle tick is found, the biosecurity plan should be considered to have failed. The application of chemical treatment methods to achieve the RMR is recommended. The accredited certifier should ensure that future consignments of cattle presented by this owner have applied chemical treatments until such time that the biosecurity plan has had the chance to succeed.

The carrier has originated from the free area within the last 5 days

Carriers that have originated from the cattle tick free area will be exposed to cattle tick infestation depending on where they have been since moving into the tick infested zone. The following will give guidance to the accredited certifier when conducting the inspection phase for these animals.

- Carriers that have originated from the cattle tick free area and have been in pasture in the infested zone for less than 5 days would be expected to be infested with larval stages of the tick and the larval stages would not have had an opportunity to be in a moult stage.

- Carriers that have only entered facilities such as saleyards, showgrounds or other low-risk venues pose a low risk of exposure to tick infestations.

Owner inspection

The RMRs to access a clearing facility in the free zone require the owner/person in charge to complete a tick free manual inspection OR a tick free visual inspection and an owner chemical treatment before presenting to an accredited certifier.

The owner should already have taken actions to ensure the livestock meet the required standards.

The accredited certifier should ensure that the owner/person in charge who uses this requirement has knowledge of:

- the procedure and guideline for tick free manual inspection of high-risk tick carriers, OR

- the procedure and guideline for visual inspection of high-risk tick carriers and the procedure and guideline for the use of chemical treatments on cattle tick carriers.

If a cattle tick is found

Undertake a visual assessment to identify the tick is a cattle tick using the guideline for identifying the life cycle stages of a cattle tick.

If a cattle tick is identified, determine whether the tick is alive. A live tick is one that shows obvious signs of movement or from which body fluids can be expressed.

The owner/person in charge of the consignment must be shown evidence that the tick is alive and is a cattle tick.

If an owner of any consignment disputes the identification of a tick infested mob, the accredited certifier should consider submitting the tick for formal identification. The consignment will still be considered tick infested and must not enter the tick free zone.

Ticks found on consignments from properties in the cattle tick free zone must be submitted for positive laboratory identification.

The accredited certifier will need to demonstrate ongoing capacity to correctly identify cattle ticks. The accredited certifier should implement a process where they regularly submit ticks to a Biosecurity Queensland inspector to validate their knowledge.

This can be achieved by:

- placing the cattle tick in a specimen jar in methylated spirits
- keeping records to identify the consignment, the origin of the consignment and the date found tick infested
- regularly submitting these samples to your nearest biosecurity officer.

Re inspection intervals

If a carrier has been found tick infested the owner may choose to treat the animal with further chemical treatments to enable the RMRs to be met on the next inspection.

It is important to note that all chemicals have a label requirement for retreatment intervals. Failure to comply with these label requirements could result in a breach of the *Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988.*

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority permits the use of the following chemicals at intervals less than label requirements only when used for the purpose of complying with risk minimisation requirements as required in the Queensland Biosecurity Manual:

- Registered wettable powder products containing 500g/kg Amitraz as the active constituent.
- Registered emulsifiable concentrate products containing 125g/L Amitraz as the active constituent.
- Bayticol Cattle Dip and Spray, containing 75.00 g/L Flumethrin as the only active constituent.

This means these chemicals may be used at 4-7 day intervals if being used for the chemical treatments required to comply with an RMR.

All other chemicals including pour-ons and injectables must only be used at the recommended label requirement.

It will be important for the accredited certifier to know what chemical the owner/person in charge may have used on their animals. The owner declaration will assist the accredited certifier.

Chemicals have different modes of actions and different times to reach maximum efficacy and before they deplete to levels that will not be affecting the tick.

- Animals treated with a dip or spray should not be presented any earlier than 4 days after their final treatment.
- Animals treated with pour-on or injectables should not be presented any earlier than 6 days after their final treatment.

The following timeframes are considered best practice timeframes for the time from the chemical treatment to being presented for inspection:

- between 4 days (96 hours) and 7 days (168 hours) following treatment with an acaricide; or
- between 6 days (144 hours) and 9 days (216 hours) following treatment with an endectocide.

Time limits on moving a carrier to a prescribed facility

Movements into the cattle tick free zone will have a nominated timeframe of 24 hours for the livestock to enter the free zone after the RMR has been successfully achieved.

This timeframe may be extended to 48 hours in certain circumstances after the accredited certifier consults with a biosecurity officer.

Factors to consider for an extension:

- Is the consignment being held in a low-risk tick environment?
- Is the reason for extending the time frame because of an event outside of the owner's control?
- Is the risk of retaining the consignment in the infested zone being appropriately managed?

A biosecurity officer who has endorsed an extension to 48 hours should document this approval in writing for the accredited certifier either electronically or hard copy.

Any extension to the 24 hour time frame should be endorsed on the biosecurity certificate by the accredited certifier.

Written evidence should be retained by the accredited certifier to demonstrate they have consulted a biosecurity officer.

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eDOCS reference