# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Bovine TB Technical Advisory Group Review of Existing On-Farm Slaughter of TB Reactors Policy** |
| **DATE**  | **16 May 2024** |
| **BY** | **Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs** |

I fully recognise the impacts a TB breakdown brings to farmers, their families and businesses and have heard about these issues from individual affected farmers, FUW, NFU Cymru and others.

The slaughter of cattle on-farm can be particularly distressing to those who witness it and can have a detrimental impact on wellbeing and mental health. The main reasons cattle may be slaughtered on-farm for TB control purposes are either because they are not able to travel on welfare grounds, particularly if in late pregnancy, or as a consequence of medicine withdrawal periods.

On the 15 April I announced the membership of the bovine TB Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The TAG’s inaugural meeting was held on 17 April, their first priority being to discuss and produce advice regarding on-farm slaughter.

I have received their advice, which I have accepted in full. We will now be making immediate changes to the on-farm slaughter policy, with the aim of reducing the numbers of cattle slaughtered on-farmin Wales.

Farmers will be able to choose to delay the removal of a cow or heifer in the last 60 days of pregnancy and animals that have given birth in the previous 7 days, subject to biosecurity conditions to protect other cattle in the herd. Equally, for there to be a limited flexibility to isolate and delay removal if within a few days of the end of a medicine withdrawal period, on a case-by-case basis.

I have also asked officials to work with NFU Cymru, FUW and other relevant representatives from the cattle sector to set up an industry-led partnership working group which will continue to look at how on-farm slaughter for different reasons, and it’s impacts, can be minimised through co-design and delivery. I remain clear Government cannot eradicate TB alone. Partnership working with our farmers and vets is crucial to reach our shared goal of a TB-free Wales.