

GOOD NEWS! WE'RE REDUCING TB TESTING REQUIREMENTS FOR MORE THAN 7000 HERDS

Farmers can enjoy the benefit of less TB testing as OSPRI's TBfree programme reduces the disease control areas.

The farming industry's investment in TB eradication is paying off again. This year's disease control area (DCA) changes affect 2.3 million hectares, about 7400 herds and result in 289,000 fewer TB tests. The changes are effective from 1 March.

If you're in a region where disease control areas have been reduced, you'll benefit from significantly fewer TB tests as special testing area requirements are relaxed. However, due to an isolated cluster of wildlife related TB infections in the Mt Cargill area in Otago, a new movement control area (MCA) is being created. Herds in this area will have new movement restrictions.

OSPRI's TBfree programme divides the country into a number of disease control areas. Each has different TB testing requirements and control measures depending on the level of risk of TB being transferred from infected wildlife (mainly possums) to cattle and deer. Intense TB testing, movement control and both ground and aerial pest control are used to stop the spread of TB. As OSPRI's work

proves successful in each area, disease control areas are redefined and testing requirements relaxed.

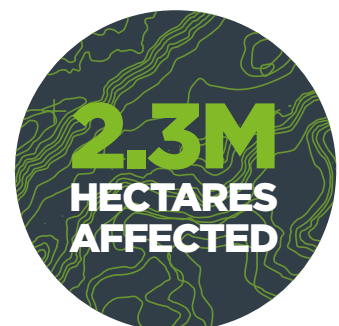
Over the past five years, OSPRI's TBfree programme has eradicated TB in possums from 1.6 million hectares as at the end of 2016 and infected herds have been brought down to 43 – a huge decrease from nearly 1700 in 1994.

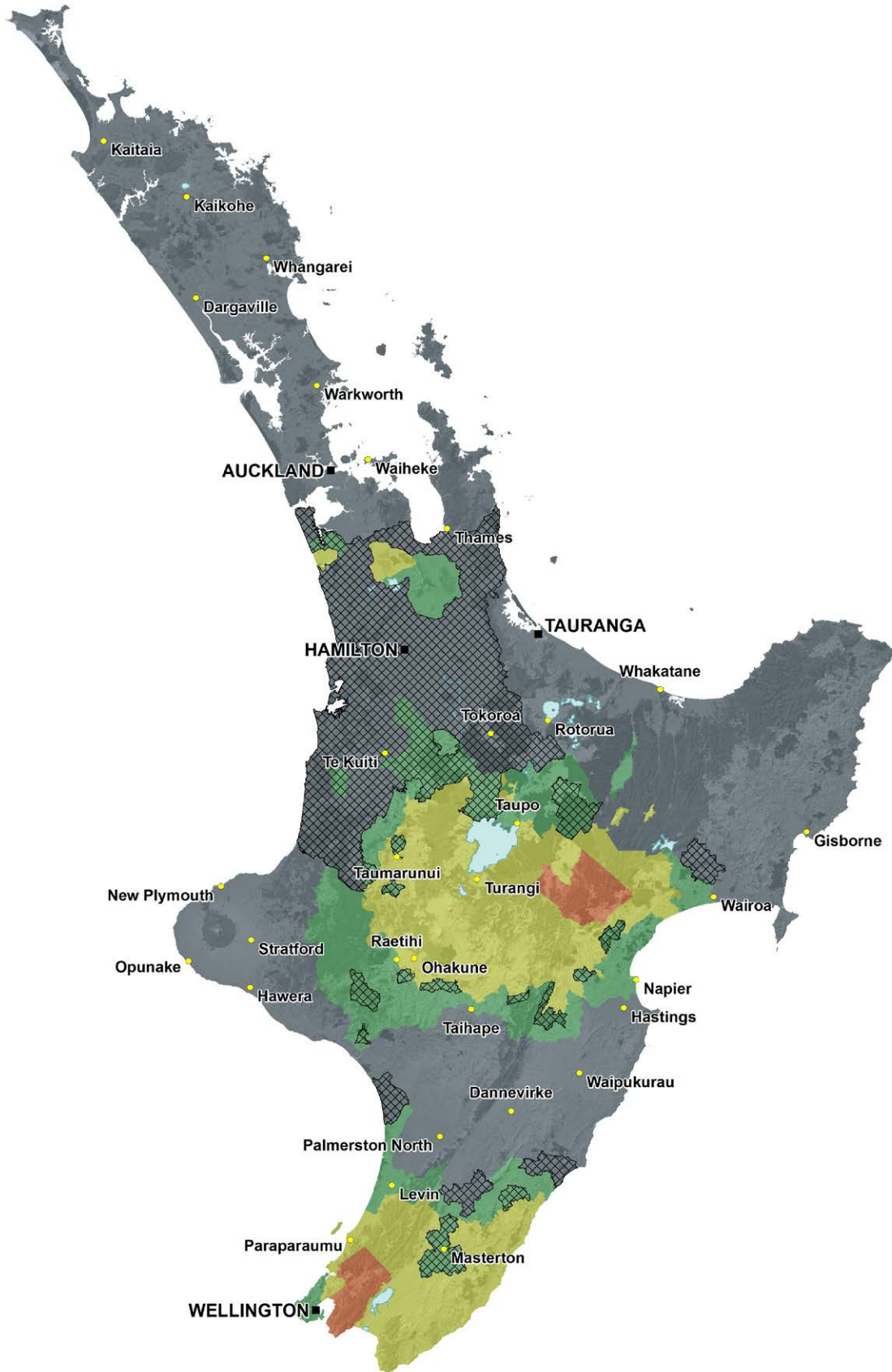
A revised plan for tackling TB was launched during 2016. The plan's goals include eradicating TB from New Zealand, with TB freedom from cattle and deer herds by 2026, TB freedom from possums by 2040, and biological eradication by 2055. In order to achieve that, changes to the TB testing and pest control approach will be phased in.



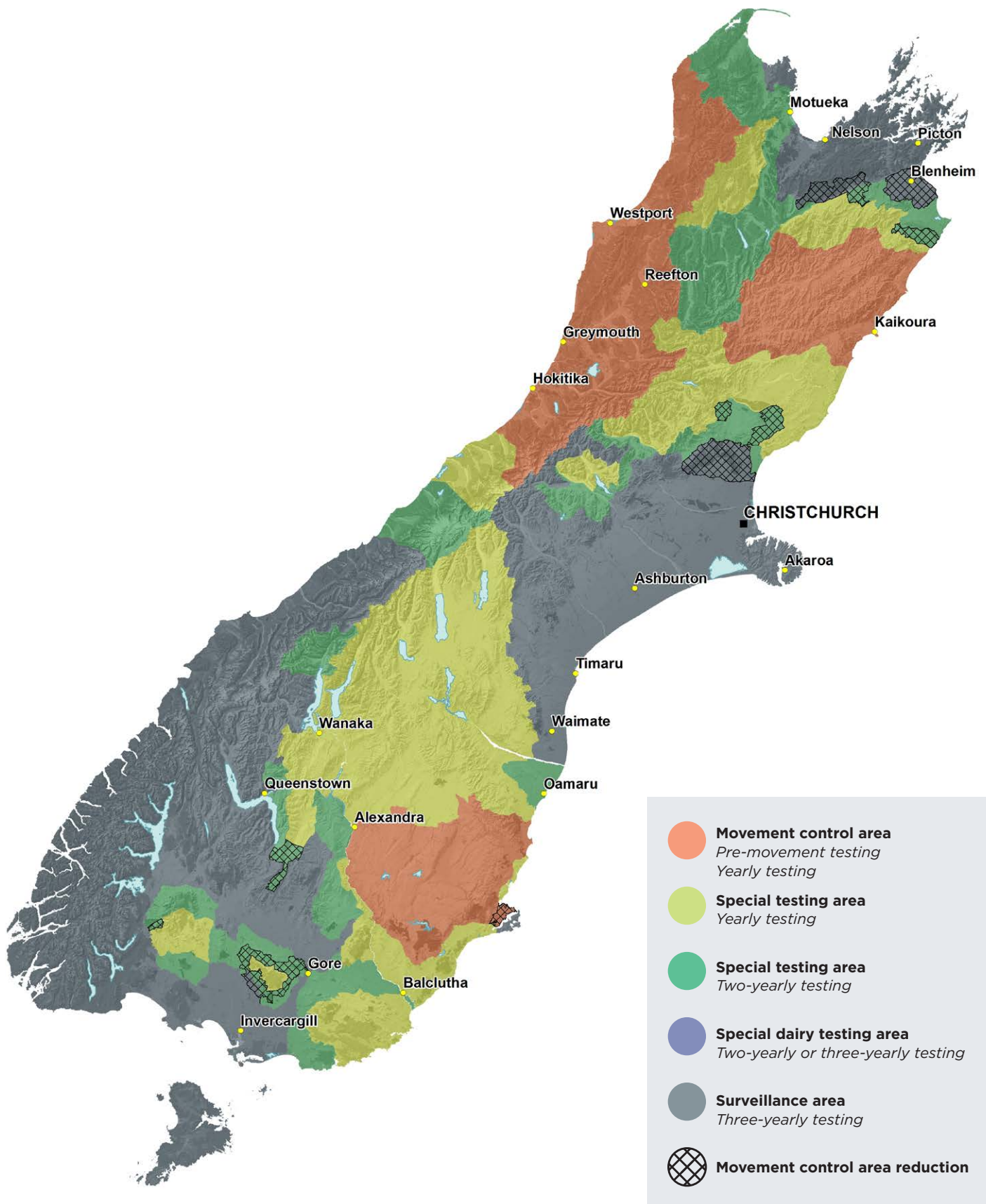
Visit tbfree.co.nz/dcamap to check which disease control area you're in.

New areas will be available on 1 March.





DISEASE CONTROL AREA CHANGES FROM 1 MARCH 2017





Pete Morgan

TESTING CHANGES ILLUSTRATE TB PROGRAMME'S PROGRESS

Pete Morgan has been farming 200 hectares at Pokuru, near Te Awamutu in south Waikato for 18 years, milking 530 cows.

From 1 March, his TB testing regime will change from annual to biennial

as the TBfree programme's disease control areas (DCAs) are relaxed. The TB Plan that was revised and refreshed last year has TB eradication as its primary focus.

"That's just brilliant," says Peter, who farms with his wife Ann. "Logistically, the impact on the cows and us is not just a half-day's testing, but the amount of time the cows are off the pasture adds to the effect. Getting them into the shed, especially on a hot summer's day has a significant impact, and milk production is inevitably down, so it's a job we never particularly look forward to."

Pete says: "The best thing is the acknowledgment, for both the community and us, that we are actually making progress towards eradication."

The change of the Special Testing Area in the Waikato affects more than a million hectares, 2410 dairy herds and reduces the number of individual tests required by more than 120,000.

"I've been testing my whole career and we've never had a reactor. Like most farms we've had a bunch of avian reactors and a few false positives. But we know that our industry and our area are making significant progress," says Pete.

"The TB work goes hand-in-hand with NAIT – they're inextricably linked, so we have a thorough and reliable way of recording and tracking animals for our normal farm recording systems.

"It's a massive change, but we can feel now the end is in sight for TB. A real TBfree New Zealand is a very big deal."

Pete says that as an industry, farming is making significant progress against TB and as we reduce testing and control areas and concentrate our resources we will see much faster movement towards the end game.

"At the same time it's going to be very reliant on everyone's discipline and ability to concentrate on their part of management of stock movements and use of NAIT," he says.



Spencer and Susan White

TB TESTING EASES FOR MARLBOROUGH FARMERS

Spencer and Susan White farm on the north side of the Wairau River 40 kilometres from Blenheim in Marlborough. For 20 years they've milked 550 cows twice a day on a farm that's flat with a top and bottom

terrace, two-thirds of which bounds the steep bush of the Mount Richmond Forest Park.

That used to mean an increased risk of bovine tuberculosis for cattle and deer as TB-infected possums could wander out of the bush onto farmland. But for more than 20 years, methodical TBfree possum control has eradicated disease from the area's wildlife, and the region is now a vector-free area (VFA) – no TB-carrying possums.

"When I heard the talk of eradication 10 years ago, I wasn't sure if it was possible," says Spencer, "but it's amazing the progress we're making now."

The Northbank-Dashwood region of Marlborough is a small area for dairy with only half-a-dozen herds, although there are 178 beef and five deer herds in the surrounding 95,500 hectares.

On 1 March, the TB testing regime for all cattle and deer over 24 months will change from biennial to once every three years. That means more than 1000 fewer herds tested, and another step towards the TBfree programme's goals of eradicating bovine TB by 2055.

"It is nice to have one less job to do, because we live in a time when we seem to be getting more and more. The fact that we haven't had to test this year has been a bonus – we've had enough to do without it!"



FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information visit tbfree.co.nz.

If you have questions or need a hand call OSPRI on

0800 482 463

OSPRI manages the NAIT and TBfree programmes and can help you meet your responsibilities for each.