

Farm Specific Management Program for Salmonella Dublin in BC Dairy Herds

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BACKGROUND

Salmonella Dublin (S. Dublin) is a highly contagious disease that primarily impacts dairy cattle. Since 2022, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) Office of the Chief Veterinarian (OCV) and Animal Health Center (AHC) laboratory, in partnership with the BC Dairy Association, WestGen and others, have conducted a multifaceted research and surveillance program to develop an understanding of S. Dublin within British Columbia.

Using passive and active surveillance testing, risk factor investigation, and transmission network analysis, we found that S. Dublin was highly prevalent and widely distributed across the province, with 30% of BC dairy farms infected. Large farms in BC tended to be at higher risk of being positive for S. Dublin, which is attributed to certain higher-risk farm management practices. BC dairy isolates were genetically similar to US cattle isolates, suggesting the importation of US cattle may be driving transmission in these larger farms. Furthermore, there was evidence of some farms having repeated introductions of S. Dublin, which may warrant investigation into why these farms appear to be at higher risk for infection.

Calves were the most at risk of severe disease and death, which was most commonly characterized by respiratory symptoms. S. Dublin was often misdiagnosed clinically, resulting in ineffective empirical antibiotic therapy, which points towards a need for better communication and access to effective diagnostic testing for S. Dublin.

The 2022-2025 S. Dublin program revealed that despite the high prevalence of S. Dublin in BC, producers had variable opinions as to the importance of S. Dublin for their herds and were often unclear on how to effectively manage and mitigate this disease. Firsthand accounts and peer-to-peer narrative highly influenced producers' perceptions of S. Dublin management. Overall, the 2022-2025 program showed that S. Dublin management may benefit from providing better support to producers most invested in controlling or preventing S. Dublin on their farm, specifically from the farm's herd veterinarian who is equipped to provide personalized recommendations to producers.

This program is funded in part by the governments of Canada and British Columbia under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

PROGRAM GOAL

As the next phase in supporting BC dairy farmers to manage this disease, the BC S. Dublin Program will evolve into a four-option initiative where producers can select a preferred option for their herds. The new program will run for 18 months from April 22, 2026 to December 31, 2027. Towards the end of this time frame, AF will administer a short farmer and herd veterinarian program impact survey. It will be important that producers work with their herd veterinarian to determine which program option is practical for their farm.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

OPTION 1: INDIVIDUAL FARM PLAN FOR STRICT CONTROL OR ERADICATION ON S. Dublin INFECTED FARMS

Producers, with support from the provincial dairy inspectors, must complete a survey to assess farm specific risk factors at the time of initial acceptance (estimate 30 minutes to complete). The survey is designed to be valuable for farm-specific program planning. A summary of farm-specific results will be shared back to the producer and their herd veterinarian within 2 weeks of completing the survey.

Before submitting any claims, and within 3 months of being accepted to the program, producers, with the support of their herd veterinarian, must develop a farm-specific S. Dublin control or eradication plan, based on the unique goals and context of the farm. Time billed to the producer by the herd veterinarian for developing the plan is an eligible program expense. The plan must be submitted to chief.veterinarian@gov.bc.ca and will be subject to review and feedback. OCV staff are available to aid in the development and review of plans, as needed.

Plans must include:

- Explicit goals, with success metrics, with regards to control or eradication of S. Dublin.
- A clear, stepwise recipe that will be followed for achieving goals and meeting metrics, including use of laboratory testing.
- A budget for eligible expenses.

Eligible expenses include:

- Veterinary professional service fees for consultation and sampling related to S. Dublin
 - Time billed to the producer by the herd veterinarian for developing the farm-specific plan is an eligible program expense.

- AHC Laboratory Services
 - Periodic bulk milk testing
 - Individual animal testing, including screening of new animals
 - Post-mortem examination of dead animals where S. Dublin is a differential diagnosis
 - Environmental and fecal testing

Other expenses are ineligible.

Accepted applicants are eligible to be reimbursed for costs up to \$8,000 in total. AHC laboratory fees will be discounted at the time of case submissions, and invoices for veterinary fees will be reimbursed via quarterly claim. All claims must be submitted within 30 days of the end of the quarter in order to be eligible for reimbursement.

OPTION 2: INDIVIDUAL FARM PLAN FOR PREVENTION OF S. Dublin INFECTION ON SD FREE FARMS

Producers, with support from the provincial dairy inspectors, must complete a survey to assess farm specific risk factors at the time of initial acceptance, (estimate 30 minutes to complete). The survey is designed to be valuable for farm-specific program planning. A summary of farm-specific results will be shared back to the producer and their herd veterinarian within 2 weeks of completing the survey.

Before submitting any claims, and within 3 months of being accepted to the program, producers, with the support of their herd veterinarian, must develop a farm-specific S. Dublin prevention plan, based on the unique goals and context of the farm. Time billed to the producer by the herd veterinarian for developing the plan is an eligible program expense. The plan must be submitted to chief.veterinarian@gov.bc.ca and will be subject to review and feedback. OCV staff

are available to aid in the development and review of plans, as needed.

Plans must include:

- Explicit goals, with success metrics, with regards to prevention of S. Dublin.
- A clear, stepwise recipe that will be followed for achieving goals and meeting metrics, including use of laboratory testing.
- A budget for eligible expenses.

Eligible expenses include:

- Veterinary professional service fees for consultation and sampling related to S. Dublin
 - Time billed to the producer by the herd veterinarian for developing the farm-specific plan is an eligible program expense.
- AHC Laboratory Services
 - Periodic bulk milk testing
 - Individual animal testing, including screening of new animals
 - Post-mortem examination of dead animals where S. Dublin is a differential diagnosis
 - Environmental and fecal testing

Other expenses are ineligible.

Accepted applicants are eligible to be reimbursed for costs up to \$3,000 in total. AHC laboratory fees will be discounted at the time of case submissions, and invoices for veterinary fees will be reimbursed via quarterly claim. If a farm participating in Option 2 does become infected with S. Dublin during the program period, the producer can apply to switch to Option 1 at that time.

OPTION 3: ROUTINE HERD MONITORING THROUGH BULK TANK TESTING FOR S. Dublin

Application based. Ministry dairy inspectors will submit bulk milk samples to the AHC for S. Dublin testing on behalf of farms each quarter. Results will be reported back to the producer and their herd veterinarian.

After acceptance to the program, and with support from the provincial dairy inspectors, producers will be encouraged to complete a survey to assess farm

specific risk factors (estimate 30 minutes to complete). A summary of farm-specific results will be shared back to the producer and their herd veterinarian within 2 weeks of completing the survey. In addition, if herd status changes from positive to negative or vice versa, another optional survey will be initiated.

All interested dairy farms in BC will be able to participate in Option 3.

OPTION 4: OPT OUT

No planned testing or intervention for S. Dublin in the herd. Producers can continue to submit samples to the AHC laboratory on a fee for service basis.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the program, applicants will require an IRMA Number and a Premises ID number.

It is anticipated that up to 20 producers will be accepted for both Option 1 and Option 2. Proposals will be reviewed and approved by AF staff on a first come, first served basis.

APPLICATIONS

To apply, please complete the application form available [here](#). It is anticipated the application form will take 15 minutes to complete.

Applications will collect information that includes:

- Farm name, contact name, IRMA number, address, phone number, email and business number
- Standard demographic information (Indigeneity, gender, age)

REIMBURSEMENT

Funding is provided through a periodic reimbursement process to approved applicants via a claim form.

On acceptance to Option 1 or Option 2, applicants must submit the [Direct Deposit Application Form \(PDF, 407 KB\)](#) for General and Service Suppliers along with a void cheque.

PROGRAM CONTACT

If you are a dairy producer and have questions about the application process or eligibility criteria, please contact Program staff at chief.veterinarian@gov.bc.ca or call AGRIServiceBC at 1-888-221-7141.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

The program is planned to run until December 31st, 2027.

The first application intake window for dairy producers to apply to the program will be open until **June 30, 2026 at 4:30PM**. At that time, applications will close for a period until review of applications submitted by the deadline is complete.

After **July 1, 2026**, additional application windows will be opened to accept new applications as funding permits.

Applicants who do not submit completed applications by the above timelines will be considered to have withdrawn their application; previously approved funding may then be reallocated to other applicants.