Veterinærinstituttet

Rapport 26 – 2026

The surveillance programme for *Brucella abortus* in cattle in Norway in 2025

REPORT 26/2025

The surveillance programme for brucellosis in cattle in Norway in 2025

Authors

Siv Meling, Lise Marie Ånestad, Petter Hopp, Jørgen Dalaker, and Siv Klevar

Suggested citation

Meling, Siv, Ånestad, Lise M, Hopp, Petter, Dalaker, Jørgen, Klevar, Siv. The surveillance programme for brucellosis in cattle in Norway in 2025. Surveillance programme report. Veterinærinstituttet 2026. © Norwegian Veterinary Institute, copy permitted with citation

Quality controlled by

Merete Hofshagen, Surveillance Programme Coordinator, Norwegian Veterinary Institute

Commissioned by

Norwegian Food Safety Authority

Mattilsynet

Published

2026 on www.vetinst.no
ISSN 1890-3290 (electronic edition)

Colophon

Cover photo: Colourbox
www.vetinst.no

Content

Summary

Blood samples from 90 cattle with abortions in the second half of pregnancy from 36 herds, and 135 bulk milk samples from 135 dairy herds with at least two registered abortions, were negative for antibodies against *Brucella* spp.

Introduction

Eradication of bovine brucellosis in Norway was achieved in 1950 (2). Since 1994, Norway has been officially recognised as free from brucellosis by the EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) (1). In Norway, brucellosis caused by *Brucella abortus*, *B. melitensis*, and *B. suis* is classified as a List 1 disease and is also listed by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). Within the European Union (EU), brucellosis is categorised under disease categories B, D, and E. Bovine brucellosis is predominantly caused by *B. abortus*.

A surveillance programme for bovine brucellosis was initiated in 2000. All samples analysed in 2000, 2001, 2003, and 2004 yielded negative results. In 2002, however, two bulk milk samples tested positive for antibodies against *Brucella* spp. Follow-up investigations did not confirm infection, and the findings were therefore considered most likely to present false-positive results.

Since 2005, surveillance has been based on passive clinical monitoring. In the period from 2004 to 2014, aborted foetuses and corresponding blood samples from the dams were examined for *Brucella* spp. infection. From 2015 onwards, surveillance has been limited to serological analysis of blood samples from the dams. In 2023, the programme was expanded to include analysis of bulk milk samples from selected dairy herds with recorded abortions.

The Norwegian Food Safety Authority (NFSA) is responsible for implementing the surveillance programme for bovine brucellosis. The Norwegian Veterinary Institute is responsible for planning the programme, collecting the bulk milk samples from the dairies, performing the analyses, and reporting the results. Inspectors of the NFSA collect the blood samples.

Aim

The aim of the programme is to document freedom from bovine brucellosis according to the demands in Regulation (EU) 2020/689, and to contribute to the maintenance of the present favourable situation.

Materials and methods

Herds and sampling

For submission of blood samples, herds were eligible for inclusion in the programme if they had experienced at least two abortions occurring between the fifth month of gestation and 14 days prior to the expected calving date within the preceding 12 months. From each herd meeting these inclusion criteria, one blood sample was collected from the dam at least two weeks after the abortion. In addition, blood samples were obtained from up to five additional dams within the same herd that had aborted at a similar stage of gestation, with one sample collected per animal.

Bulk tank milk samples were requested from four herds that had submitted material for examination for abortions during 2024 and a random selection of 147 dairy herds that had registered one to three abortions in the Norwegian dairy cattle recording system during 2024, in total 151 herds.

Laboratory analyses

The blood samples were analysed in duplicate for antibodies against *Brucella abortus* using an indirect enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), the ID Screen® Brucellosis Serum Indirect Multi-species (IDvet, Grabels, France). This assay does not discriminate between antibodies against *B. abortus*, *B. melitensis* or *B. suis*.

Samples yielding positive or doubtful results were retested in duplicate using the same ELISA. If the repeat analysis produced negative results, the sample was classified as negative. In case of inconclusive results, a new blood sample would be requested from the suspect animal and analysed as described above. Samples with positive results, would be submitted to an external laboratory for confirmatory testing.

Bulk milk samples were analysed for antibodies against *B. abortus* and *B. melitensis* using an indirect ELISA, ID Screen® Brucellosis Milk Indirect (IDvet, Grabels, France). This assay does not discriminate between antibodies against *B. abortus* or *B. melitensis.*

Samples yielding positive or inconclusive results were retested in duplicate using the same ELISA. If repeat testing produced positive or doubtful results, new bulk milk samples were collected from the suspected herd and analysed using the same method.

Results and discussion

In 2025, blood samples from 90 cattle originating from 36 herds were analysed for antibodies against *Brucella* spp. (Table 1). Of these, 27 were dairy herds (61 samples) and nine were beef herds (29 samples). In addition, bulk milk samples from 135 dairy herds were analysed. All blood and bulk milk samples tested negative for antibodies against *Brucella* spp.

In conclusion, all herds examined within the surveillance program for brucellosis in cattle were negative for antibodies against *Brucella* spp. in 2025. Bovine brucellosis has not been detected in Norway since 1953 (2, 3).

Table 1. Number of blood samples from individual cows examined for brucellosis in Norway 2000-2025.

Year	Dairy cattle (herds)		Beef cattle (herds)		Total (herds)		
	Foetuses	Cows	Foetuses	Cows	Foetuses	Cows	Herds
2000	-	-	-	-	17 (14)	-	14
2001	21 (18)	-	0 (0)	-	21 (18)	-	18
2002	18 (17)	-	10 (6)	-	28 (23)	-	23
2003	30 (25)	-	4 (3)	-	34 (28)	-	28
2004	25 (21)	28 (19)	2 (2)	2 (2)	27 (23)	30 (21)	26
2005	16 (14)	48 (26)	8 (7)	8 (4)	24 (21)	56 (30)	31
2006	11 (11)	19 (13)	0 (0)	1 (1)	11 (11)	20 (14)	15
2007	11 (10)	14 (11)	1 (1)	1 (1)	12 (11)	15 (12)	12
2008	20 (17)	42 (19)	2 (1)	5 (2)	22 (18)	47 (21)	22
2009	14 (11)	19 (11)	5 (3)	7 (3)	19 (15)	26 (10)	15
2010	9 (8)	30 (15)	3 (3)	14 (4)	12 (11)	44 (19)	22
2011	7 (7)	42 (17)	2 (1)	10 (3)	9 (8)	52 (20)	22
2012	11 (10)	47 (20)	1 (1)	1 (1)	12 (11)	48 (21)	22
2013	37 (31)	130 (64)	7 (4)	22 (7)	44 (35)	152 (71)	72
2014	20 (18)	90 (37)	6 (5)	8 (7)	26 (23)	98 (44)	45
2015	-	103 (46)	-	10 (5)	-	113 (51)	51
2016	-	116 (55)	-	31 (7)	-	147 (62)	62
2017		99 (39)		28 (9)		127 (48)	48
2018		110 (48)		29 (8)		139 (56)	56
2019		98 (29)		6 (2)		104 (31)	31
2020		107 (36)		21 (7)		128 (43)	43
2021		102 (33)		4 (1)		106 (34)	34
2022		63 (19)		15 (4)		78 (23)	23
2023		107 (35)		3 (2)		110 (37)	37
2024		91 (25)		22 (6)		113 (31)	31
2025		61 (27)		29 (9)		90 (36)	36

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank the technical staff for performing the analyses with excellence. Moreover, the authors would like to thank all personnel from the Norwegian Food Safety Authority for collection and submission of samples.

References

1. EFTA SURVEILLANCE AUTHORITY DECISION, Amended on 22 April 2021 by Decision No 33/21/COL
2. Sandvik O. Animal Health Standards in Norway. A historical perspective and assessment of the existing situation. Næss B (editor). Oslo: The Royal Ministry of Agriculture; 1994
3. Ånestad, Lise M, Tarpai, Attila, Dalaker, Jørgen, Klevar, Siv. The surveillance programme for Brucella abortus in cattle in Norway in 2024. Surveillance programme report. Norwegian Veterinary Institute 2025.

Health and well-being for animals and people

Norwegian Veterinary Institute

Ås ▪ Sandnes ▪ Bergen ▪ Trondheim ▪ Harstad ▪ Tromsø

postmottak@vetinst.no

vetinst.no