FAQ

1. Can infected cattle recover from bovine tuberculosis?

Like in humans, mere infection with *M. bovis* will not necessarily lead to clinical disease but may be eliminated by the host immune system or lie dormant and be activated at a later stage. However, once the infection has established itself in the host, tuberculosis is a chronic, progressive disease and when the affected individual has developed lesions and clinical signs, there is no self-limitation or full recovery without treatment.

2. How long is the incubation period for bovine tuberculosis?

The incubation period in the case of a chronic disease like tuberculosis is highly variable and can range from several weeks to months.

3. Is bovine tuberculosis transmissible to humans?

Bovine tuberculosis is transmissible to humans and hence constitutes a zoonotic disease.

4. Is bovine tuberculosis treatable?

There are drugs which are effective against *M. bovis*, comparable to *M. tuberculosis*, whereby the practicality of long term treatment of animals in bovine tuberculosis needs to be evaluated carefully when the prognosis is assessed.

5. In the absence of control measures, what is the mortality rate from bovine tuberculosis?

The mortality rate largely depends on the prevalence and chronicity of the disease present in a population. Under high prevalence conditions a mortality rate of 10% has been estimated.

6. Are some animals resistant to *M. bovis* or will eventually all cattle in an infected herd contract the infection?
Although it is not known beyond doubt, experience has shown that infection rate never reaches 100%, which is partially due to varying exposure risks in a herd, but has been partially attributed to resistance in a small number of animals.

7. *Are indigenous cattle breeds less susceptible than exotic breeds?*

A difference in susceptibility between breeds has been documented (published information) with cattle of the Holstein-Friesian breed showing a higher susceptibility to bovine tuberculosis compared to other breeds.