

# TB 'complacency' needs to stop

By Louise Hartley

FARMERS across Lancashire and Cumbria have been warned not to make the same mistakes as their Cheshire counterparts did 10 years ago when it comes to tackling bovine TB (bTB).

At an emergency meeting to discuss the threat of the disease spreading through the North West, two Cheshire farmers urged those present not to be complacent.

Farmers in the Lancashire and Cumbria areas are on the brink of a large-scale bTB outbreak, the same situation as Cheshire was in 10 years ago, explained dairy farmer Phil Latham.

Mr Latham, an *FG* In Your Field writer from Cheshire, has seen 80 of his cattle slaughtered due to bTB this year, alongside a

drop in sales costing £14,000 per month.

Fellow Cheshire farmer Ian McGrath's herd has been heavily infected with bTB for 11 years and he is now involved with the Bovine TB Eradication Advisory Group for England (TBEAG).

Mr McGrath said: "You must work together to form a defence against the disease or it will destroy your livestock industry."

## Problem

The emotional testimonies from both farmers were underpinned by Carl Padgett, past president of the British Veterinary Association and TBEAG member, who explained why bTB should no longer be considered 'somebody else's problem'.

Mr Padgett said: "For those who have never experienced bTB, it is difficult to understand



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the impact it has on all business activity. One farmer alone cannot win the battle to keep the North West free of TB, it must be a united front.

"When buying cattle, ask about the history of the farm or herd or

origin. Even in free areas, high risk herds can still exist.

"A flying herd or store dealer which has not been tested for four years is a higher risk than a closed herd tested within the last 12 months."

## TB-free

Robert Howe from Lambert Leonard and May farm vets, whose practice co-ordinated the meeting in Preston, said: "It would be tragic to allow bTB to take hold here. We have an opportunity now to keep it out if the whole industry can work together."

■ Farmers in Cumbria can have their say on Monday (July 29) during a bTB meeting at Borderway Mart, Carlisle. Taking place between 11am and 2pm, Animal Health and Welfare Board chairman Michael Seals will be at the meeting.