Bovine tuberculosis, caused by *Mycobacterium bovis*, is a well-known zoonotic disease which affects cattle world-wide. National programme to eradicate bovine tuberculosis commenced in Poland in 1959 and successfully ended in 1975. Since this year Poland has been free (according to at that time regulations) from this disease. At the beginning of the 60-ties the situation was very serious: In the East Poland 7-10% of all cattle population were positive in allergical tests and in the West and North Poland 20-30% and 30-50% respectively. The average percentage of affected cattle was 23.0%. In the same years over 48% of tuberculous infections in pigs were caused by *Mycobacterium bovis* and hundreds of cases in humans caused by *M. bovis* were notified (over 10%). At the end of this eradication programme, in 1975, Poland had below 0.5% of reagents and there were no isolated places for diseased cattle. In the next years the prevalence of *Mycobacterium bovis* infection in cattle was decreasing rapidly; for example in 1984 over 8000 animals were eliminated because of tuberculosis, while in 1986 it was about 2500 and below 600 in 1997-2005. The total number of outbreaks in 1999-2005 were 32 and 37, 23, 20, 22, 44, 40, respectively. During the period 1990 to 2005, bovine tuberculosis was diagnosed in 1 166 cattle herds. In the last years the outbreaks were localized especially in the central part of Poland, about 100 kilometers to the north –west from Warsaw (in two villages). Now, we have only sporadic cases of bovine tuberculosis in humans and pigs, but the problem is increasing the number of new cases of human tuberculosis caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

According to actual Polish regulations, animals aged over 6 weeks are subject to intradermal skin test at least once in every three years. Six weeks later, all reactor animals in the first single intradermal skin test are further tested by a simultaneous intradermal inoculation of bovine and avian tuberculins (3250 and 2500 international units in 0.2ml volume, respectively). Consequently, animals with a repeated positive or doubtful skin test results to bovine tuberculin are slaughtered and direct microscopy, histological and culture examinations are performed. The same diagnostic procedure is applied to examine tuberculous lesions found during routine abattoir meat inspection. Isolated *M. bovis* or other strains are identified by biochemical tests and biological trial on guinea pigs or using Hain GenoType Mycobacterium CM and AS tests.

A typical strategy for the disease control in domestic animals involves regular field tests and quarantine of infected herds before the next, explanatory tests. This prevents disease spread beyond the herd, while slaughter of diseased animals removes the infection from the herd (test and slaughter method). According to the OIE definition and the Directive 64/432 EEC Poland with about 1 000 000 cattle herds, and 5 500 000 cows (1166 outbreaks of bovine tuberculosis in the last 16 years) fulfils the condition to be free from bovine tuberculosis during the last 10 years.

In Poland a coordinated production, standardization and quality control of purified protein derivatives tuberculins are performed. These are tuberculins produced form AN5 and D4ER strains and controlled in NVRI in Pulawy, according to OIE regulations. *Mycobacterium bovis* strains infect a wide range of mammalian hosts, and eradication of the disease is difficult if there is an extensive reservoir in the wildlife population. In the last few years the bovine tuberculosis infections were detected in European bison herd in Bieszczady mountains, and singular cases in wild roe-deer and deer herd in the South of Poland. In the last 16 years 27 bovine tuberculosis cases were also detected in zoo gardens in antelopes, giraffes and bisons.

It should be stress that Polish system of eradication and monitoring of bovine tuberculosis meets its requirements and allows to hold down the number of bovine tuberculosis infected cattle herds and other species.