The objective of this study was to characterize the prevalence of bovine tuberculosis (TB) in continental Portugal, in order to identify areas with a high risk of zoonotic TB. Records of bovine TB in 2004 to 2005 were analyzed, and regions with the highest prevalence of positive farms and positive animals based on the single intradermal comparative test (IDT) were identified, as well as the regions with the highest prevalence of farms where the illness was confirmed by laboratory analysis.

The agrarian region of Alentejo presented the highest prevalence of farms with IDT positive animals (13 units out of 1,000), as well as the highest number of farms (5 out of 1,000) with diseased animals confirmed by laboratory analysis.

A positive correlation (r=0.60; p <0.0001) was found between number of IDT positive farms and farms with animals where the infection was confirmed by laboratory analysis, as well as between total number of IDT positive bovines and total number of farms where infection was confirmed by laboratory analysis (r=0.61; p <0.0001).

During the two studied years 69% of the all farms in continental Portugal and 59% of all bovine were tested for TB. Fifty height percent of the infected herds were detected through the IDT and the remaining 42% infected herds were detected through inspections of slaughtered animals.

From the 464 animals positive to TB, 29% did not show histopathologic lesions despite the isolation of *Mycobacterium spp*. From those presenting TB lesions, 64.6 % had respiratory lesions and 25.3% had lesions in the ganglions of the head.

No significant correlation between TB cases in the general population and farmers and family of the IDT positive farms was found, even in counties with high prevalence of IDT positive farms and confirmed TB infected animals including in Basto region of northern of Portugal.

We conclude that no relationship could be found between human and bovine tuberculosis, field IDT testing of cattle failed to detect a considerable percentage of TB positive herds, and slaughter house inspection of the carcasses is an important additional method to detect positive herds.