



DEBATE PACK

Number 2017/0075, 15 March 2017

E-petition 165672 relating to badger culling

Summary

This Debate Pack has been prepared ahead of the debate on ending the badger cull instead of expanding into new areas to be held in Westminster Hall on Monday 27 March 2017 at 4.30pm. The Member in charge is Paul Flynn MP. The subject for the debate has been selected by the Petitions Committee, following an e-petition, [End the badger cull instead of expanding to new areas](#)

Further information can be found in the House of Commons Library Briefing Paper: [Badgers: Culls in England](#)

Alison Pratt
David Hirst

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Background: E-petition on badger culling

Below is the wording of the petition on badger culling, followed by the Government response.

End the badger cull instead of expanding to new areas

Since 2013, thousands of badgers have been killed in a Government cull attempting to control bovine TB. Against scientific advice & before a 4 year trial has completed, the government is now expanding the cull to new counties - tens of thousands of healthy badgers could be killed.

Experts in disease control and animal welfare agree that pilot badger culls have proven both ineffective and inhumane. Shooting badgers is also expensive, costing tax-payers some £5,000 per animal. Bovine TB is a serious problem but killing badgers is not the solution, and could actually make the situation worse. It is a costly distraction from an effective solution incorporating vaccination, increased cattle movement control measures and improved testing.

108,319 signatures

Petition closed: 26 February 2017

Government response

The Government is pursuing a comprehensive bovine TB eradication strategy including tighter cattle controls, biosecurity, and badger control in areas where the disease is widespread.

Bovine TB is the greatest animal health threat to the UK. Dealing with this dreadful disease is costing taxpayers over £100 million each year and last year alone more than 28,000 cattle had to be slaughtered in England, causing devastation and distress for farmers and rural communities, where often herds have often been built up over many generations.

That is why it is essential that we eradicate bovine TB.

We are taking strong action to deliver a long-term plan to eradicate the disease and protect the future of the UK's dairy and beef industries, with a comprehensive strategy including tighter cattle testing and movement controls, improving biosecurity on farm and when trading, and badger control in areas where badgers are an important factor in spreading disease to cattle.

This approach is backed up by the evidence and experience of other countries. This approach has successfully eradicated bovine TB in Australia and is working in Ireland and New Zealand.

There is still a long way to go. While cattle controls can have a significant impact, the Government's Chief Veterinary Officer and the British Veterinary Association agree that we won't eradicate the disease without dealing with the spread of TB from infected wildlife too.

There is broad scientific consensus that badgers are implicated in the spread of TB in cattle in parts of England.

TB was first found in English badgers in 1971. In 1974 badgers were removed from a severely infected cattle farm with the result that there were no herd TB outbreaks there for five years. Between 1975 and 1978 the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food funded work that demonstrated conclusively that there is a link between TB in badgers and cattle. Subsequent work in Ireland has reaffirmed that finding.

The Krebs Review observed that between 1975 and 1979 when gassing was used to remove badgers, cattle TB incidence in the South-West fell from 1.65% to 0.4%, a 75% reduction. Subsequently, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, more widespread badger removal was carried out in three areas. In Thornbury, Gloucestershire, cattle TB incidence fell from 5.6% in the ten years before badger removal to 0.45% in the fifteen years afterwards, a reduction of 90%. In Steeple Leaze, Dorset, there were no herd TB outbreaks for seven years after badgers were removed. In Hartland, Devon, cattle TB incidence dropped from 15% in 1984 to just 4% in 1985, a reduction of more than two thirds.

Following concerns that those exercises lacked rigorous scientific 'controls' the government commissioned the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT). Despite the challenge of the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak, the RBCT showed that in the four years after proactive badger removal there was a significant reduction in cattle TB incidence relative to control areas. The greatest relative reduction seen was 54% in the eighteen months after proactive badger removal operations, when the full benefits began to appear. The RBCT confirmed what the previous exercises had shown.

Licensed badger control operations led by local farmers and landowners in parts of Gloucestershire, Somerset and Dorset have shown that it is safe, humane and effective in reducing the number of badgers needed to bring down disease levels in cattle.

Based on the advice of the Chief Veterinary Officer, we are extending this approach over a wider area to bring greater disease control benefits to hard-pressed farmers in the South West.

We have also funded licensed private badger vaccination projects to help create a buffer zone around the South-West where TB is most widespread. However TB vaccination does not provide complete protection and it has no impact on infected badgers so it cannot replace culling and a shortage of the vaccine means it's not an option right now.

To ensure we have a successful and resilient industry, we are determined to use all available measures necessary to eradicate this devastating disease as quickly as possible.

We will continue to deliver on our 25-year strategy for a TB-free England.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

2. Press Articles

BBC online

'Tuberculosis-resistant' cattle developed in China

Helen Briggs 1 February 2017

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-38810073>

Wales online

Bovine TB is lower than at any time in the past 10 years, Wales' chief vet tells farmers

Chris Kelsey 30 January 2017

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/business/farming/bovine-tb-lower-any-time-12529702>

Guardian

Badger cull kills more than 10,000 animals in three months

Damian Carrington 16 December 2016

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/dec/16/badger-cull-kills-more-than-10000-animals-three-months-bovine-tb>

Wales online

Badger culls must be carried out over wide areas and in time to stop them reinfesting cattle

Chris Kelsey 14 November 2016

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/business/farming/badger-culls-must-carried-out-12175543>

The Times

Simon Barnes: Extending the badger cull is an expensive, irrational mistake

2 October 2016

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/simon-barnes-extending-the-badger-cull-is-an-expensive-irrational-mistake-t6kmtc2w8>

Independent

Government expands badger cull to five new areas despite warnings it doesn't work

Jon Stone 30 August 2016

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/badger-cull-expansion-areas-protest-evidence-bovine-tb-a7216091.html>

Guardian

Badger cull linked to rise in bovine TB cases

Steven Morris 19 February 2016

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/feb/19/badger-cull-linked-to-rise-in-bovine-tb-cases>

3. Press releases

Badger Trust

Badger Trust calls for urgent debate in Parliament on planned extension of badger culls as e-petition exceeds 100,000 signatures.

6 February 2017

On 4 February the Government e-petition set up by naturalist and broadcaster Simon King reached 100,000 signatures.

Over the last 4 years over £35 million of tax payers money has been spent killing just under 15,000 badgers in England, none of which have been tested for TB.

Nearly half of the badgers have been killed using a free shooting method which is condemned as ineffective and cruel by the government's Independent Expert Panel and the British Veterinary Association.

To date the government have provided no evidence to prove the large scale killing of badgers is having any significant impact on lowering of bovine TB in cattle in or around the badger culling zones.

Despite the growing mountain of evidence to prove that the badger cull is failing on scientific, cost and animal welfare grounds, the government is planning to extend the cull to many new areas of the country over the next 3 years and to allow farmers and landowners to kill badgers beyond a 4 year period under a local badger control licence, without any proper monitoring or scrutiny.

Responding to the petition reaching 100,000 signatures the CEO of the Badger Trust Dominic Dyer said:

"Public opposition to the cruel, ineffective and hugely costly badger cull remains very strong and now that Simon King's petition has exceeded 100,000 signatures the Badger Trust is calling for another urgent debate on the badger cull policy in Parliament.

Despite all the evidence that badger culling is not lowering bovine TB in cattle the government is pressing ahead with extending the culls and loosening the licence restrictions to a point where we could see hundreds of thousands of badgers killed over the next 5 years with a real threat of local extinction of the species from many parts of England, which is a national disgrace"

RSPCA

Back off badgers in England

Two 'pilot' badger culls, in Somerset and Gloucestershire, began in August 2013 as part of measures to try and control the spread of Bovine tuberculosis (bTB). A third cull area, in Dorset, was licensed in

2015. In 2016 this was increased by seven to make ten areas in South West England licensed for culls.

We objected to the licensing of further cull areas as we do not believe that the 'pilot' culls achieved their objectives of being efficient and humane.

Half the culls failed to meet their so-called 'targets' of numbers of badgers culled. And it is extremely likely that up to 20 percent of badgers shot took longer than five minutes to die. Also, no information has been provided to demonstrate that the two 'pilot' culls have had an impact on the incidence of bTB in cattle in the cull areas.

A real solution

Focusing on badgers is a costly distraction

We believe that by improving the welfare of cattle through better husbandry, strict movement controls, increased levels of testing and improved biosecurity are more effective ways of dealing with bTB in the long term. We also believe that vaccination of badgers and cattle has an important part to play in the management of this disease.

A new approach is needed to tackle this disease, to better serve the farmers who are stricken by the effects of TB, their cattle and the badgers.

Call to end the ineffective culls

On Monday, 27 March, MP's will have the opportunity to debate the badger cull. Write to your MP today. Ask them to attend the debate and to call for an end to the badger culls in favour of a more effective solution incorporating vaccination, increased cattle movement control measures and improved testing.

Defra Press release

TB strategy ahead of schedule as England set to apply for officially TB-free status for half the country

16 December 2016

Government's strategy to tackle bovine TB continues to deliver results

England is set to apply for Officially TB-Free (OTF) status for more than half of the country next year - two years ahead of schedule - as the Government's strategy to tackle [bovine TB](#) (bTB) continues to deliver results.

Dealing with Bovine TB in England costs taxpayers over £100 million a year, required the culling of 28,000 cattle in 2015 and causes devastation and distress for rural communities.

Gaining OTF status for the low risk area, covering the north and east of England, would boost trade opportunities and mean some herds require less regular TB testing, reducing costs for farmers.

This would be the first time anywhere in England has enjoyed this status, making beef exports from the UK more attractive for trade partners around the world. Achieving this status for the low risk area is a key step in the government's 25-year plan for the whole of the UK to be TB-free by 2038.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

Gaining global recognition that more than half of England is TB-free will be a significant milestone in our long-term plan to eradicate this devastating disease, and will open up new trading opportunities for farmers.

We have much still to do in the worst affected parts of the country, but this shows that our strategy - combining practical biosecurity measures, a robust cattle movement and testing regime, and badger control in areas where the disease is rife - is right and is working.

[Results](#) published today confirm all ten licensed [badger control](#) operations achieved successful outcomes. [A consultation](#) opens today on next steps for badger control in areas that have completed the first four years of intensive culling. This will mean the disease reduction benefits we anticipate are prolonged for many years to come.

Other measures announced today as part of the government's 25-year strategy to eradicate bovine TB are:

- [Wider use of blood tests alongside the current skin test in the high risk area](#) to provide a more sensitive testing regime in TB affected herds, minimising the risk of leaving infected animals in herds.
- [A plan to introduce new, more coherent powers to manage the TB risk in pigs, sheep, goats, deer and camelids](#), to bring them more in line with cattle controls. This will include new statutory compensation arrangements for these species.
- More frequent updates to the [ibTB](#) online tool which allows farmers to view TB outbreaks close to their farm. From early in 2017 the data will be refreshed every fortnight rather than every month.

Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens said:

This year we have seen that badger control can be delivered successfully on a wider scale. Further expansion in the coming years, alongside our robust cattle movement and testing regime, will allow us to achieve and maintain long term reductions in the level of TB across the South West and Midlands where the disease is currently widespread.

The government is taking robust action to beat the disease, with a strategy including stronger cattle testing and movement controls, good biosecurity, badger control in areas where TB is rife and vaccination when possible. [The strategy sets out how we plan to achieve TB-freedom across the country by 2038.](#)

Vaccinating healthy badgers is part of the government's long-term plan and could play an important role in preventing bovine TB spreading to new areas of the country. Defra plans to resume the Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme, which offers support for private badger vaccination projects in edge area counties, in 2018 when we expect vaccine supplies to be available once more following the current global shortage.

The government is also supporting farmers to take practical action to reduce the risk of infection onto their farm. This includes support for a new CHeCS TB cattle herd accreditation scheme, on-farm biosecurity demonstrations for farmers, and training for vets delivered by APHA jointly with the private sector. Farmers can also access practical guidance on the [TB Hub](#), which brings advice from farming experts, vets and government together in one place.

NFU

Bovine TB eradication update: NFU response

16 December 2016

NFU President Meurig Raymond said: "The [news that more than half of England could have Officially TB-Free status](#) two years ahead of the Government's original timetable will be a welcome boost for beef and dairy farmers in those areas.

"Gaining this status for the north and east of England ahead of schedule shows that the Government's comprehensive 25-year strategy is having an impact. If we are to achieve what everybody ultimately wants – a TB free England – it is vital that all elements of this strategy are implemented in full in the areas of the country where they will have most impact.

"I would like to thank all the people involved with the cull companies for their hard work and dedication which ensured this year's culls were completed safely, humanely and effectively, as well as successfully in terms of reaching the targets necessary to be confident of achieving the disease control benefits we all want.

"If culling is to have the maximum impact on disease it is vital that it takes place in as much of the area where bTB is rife as possible. We will continue to offer help, advice and support to farmers who want to apply for a cull licence in these areas and where culling will have a beneficial impact on disease control.

"Farmers continue to play their part in helping tackle this disease through cattle movement controls, cattle testing, improving biosecurity on farm, and by committing their own time, money and effort to helping control the disease reservoir in wildlife in as part of the Government's disease control strategy. The Chief Vet has said that consideration must now be given to some form of badger control in areas that have completed an intensive four-year cull to prolong the

disease control benefits. We will consult widely with our members before submitting our response to this proposal.

“We are pleased that Defra has listened to the recommendations made by the NFU about only introducing the wider use of the gamma interferon blood test alongside the current skin test in cull areas after a number of years of successful culling to help minimise the risk of leaving infected animals in the herd. We await further details on how and when this will be rolled out, but it is important there is clear information about the trigger points for when the test would be used and that compensation for any reactors is paid in line with current policy.

“We welcome the announcement of a coherent plan to manage bTB in non-bovine species which is more in line with current cattle controls. It is vital that a comprehensive plan is in place to deal with this disease in all species. The NFU was particularly concerned about the proposed compensation levels and lobbied for an appropriate source of valuation data and rates. We are very pleased that this has been addressed by Defra.

“We have always said badger vaccination has a role to play in the area on the edge of disease spread to stop it spreading further. We welcome the news that the Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme will resume in 2018.”

Badger Trust

Badger Cull Wastes Money

14 November 2016

From his questions asked in parliament, Rob Marris MP has discovered that the development of a tuberculosis vaccine for cattle has been sacrificed in favour of a costly compensation scheme for farmers.

Since 1998 the government has paid out an £341 million¹ in compensation to farmers for the slaughter of cattle infected with TB, but has spent only £35 million on research to develop a vaccination and associated diagnostics. ²

Rob Marris said: “Prevention is better than cure for both farmer and badger – yet these astonishing figures indicate a skewed set of priorities. Since 1998, government has spent on average £19 million per year in compensation and only £1.9 million on research.³ If the government keeps focussing on compensating farmers at the expense of developing a vaccine, we’ll all end up paying out for evermore.”

The development of a vaccination would help both farmers and badgers – animals which are currently facing the largest ever cull, with the government recently announcing a tripling of the areas where badgers can be culled. The loss of cattle can be heart-breaking for farmers, and is not a short-term problem. Nor can it be solved through compensation. According to the ‘Farm Crisis Network’, slaughter can have a longer term impact on the growth of a farm, and only one third of farmers said the compensation covered the loss.⁴

Mr Marris commented: "It is right that there is a compensation scheme for farmers whose cattle are devastated by the spread of TB, but it is wrong that the government spends such a relatively small amount of funding into a viable vaccination. That discrepancy must not continue. There is a clear economic argument to implement a stronger policy of 'prevention' (vaccination) rather than the 'cure' (compensation) which is costing the taxpayers tens of millions a year."

Dominic Dyer CEO of the Badger Trust & Policy Adviser Born Free Foundation said: "Trials in Ethiopia and Mexico have shown that a TB vaccine could be 58-68% effective in preventing the spread of bovine TB in cattle.

"For the past 5 years the government has stated it will trial a TB cattle vaccine in the UK. In 2014 Defra commissioned a consortium including Triveritas UK, scientists from the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency and Cambridge University to design field trials in the UK.

"Triveritas, which specialises in undertaking livestock field trials, was to design the trial for the vaccine together with a new diagnostic test for differentiating between infected and immunised cows

"Despite the importance of developing an TB cattle vaccine, Defra announced in 2015 that it had called off the trial on cost grounds.

"This decision causing anger and concern in both the farming and wildlife conservation sectors. However the government has made no new commitment to move forward with a TB cattle vaccine trial since the 2015 General Election.

"We are now calling on the Defra Secretary of State Andrea Leadson to urgently move forward with a TB cattle vaccine in the UK, as this will provide a highly effective means of lowering the spread of bovine TB in cattle, without having to waste tens of millions of pounds of public money on a scientifically ineffective and cruel badger cull."

Wildlife Trusts

New badger cull imminent: The Wildlife Trusts call for end to flawed policy

23 August 2016

The Wildlife Trusts will oppose any decision by Natural England to grant new licences for culling badgers and will call on the Government and the newly appointed Secretary of State, Andrea Leadsom, to overrule and reverse this decision immediately.

Paul Wilkinson, The Wildlife Trusts' Head of Living Landscapes, says:

"The Wildlife Trusts believe that the control of Bovine TB in cattle should be the main focus of everyone's efforts to control this problem. The evidence shows that badgers are not the primary culprits in the spread of TB in cattle: the primary route of infection is via cow-to-cow contact. A vaccine for cattle should be a priority. The Government has

failed to develop one for TB. UK Cattle are already vaccinated for up to 16 diseases* - why should TB be different?"

Paul Wilkinson continues: "Opinion polls clearly show that the public is overwhelmingly against the killing of badgers and it is an extremely costly for the taxpayer and poor value for money. The 2013-14 culls in Gloucestershire and Somerset cost the taxpayer more than £4.9 million in policing costs. This is equivalent to the annual salary costs of over 120 police officers over a two-year period.

"The results of the previous badger culls indicate that this policy is flawed and unsupported by the evidence. Culling has been shown to be more expensive, less effective than other Bovine TB (bTB) control mechanisms and the free-shooting of badgers has been shown to be an inhumane method of killing."

The Wildlife Trusts call on the Government to abandon its failed culling policy. An evidence-based approach must be developed and Government must take immediate action to:

- Reduce cattle-to-cattle transmission of bovine TB - the major cause of infection - by tightening movement controls on cattle even further
- Accelerate research into cattle vaccination
- Improve testing regimes for cattle
- Invest in more research into better techniques for early detection of TB in cattle
- Ensure higher standards of biosecurity on farms and link this to cross-compliance for subsidy payments
- Secure alternative sources of badger vaccine and speed up the approval process so that suspended vaccination programmes can resume as soon as possible

4. Parliamentary material

4.1 PQs

[Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control](#)

Asked by: Glindon, Mary

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the levels of bovine TB in areas which are (a) under and (b) not under badger control measures.

Answering member: George Eustice | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The report on the comparison of the effect of the first two years of badger control in the first two areas is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-incidence-of-tb-in-cattle-in-licensed-badger-control-areas-in-2014-to-2015>

21 Mar 2017 | Written questions | House of Commons | 67290

[Badgers](#)

Asked by: Glindon, Mary

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the relative effectiveness of cage trapping and controlled shooting in controlling badger populations.

Answering member: George Eustice | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

No direct comparison between the effectiveness of cage trapping and controlled shooting has been made. A combination of cage trapping and controlled shooting is the most efficient approach to obtain the required 70% population reduction to ensure disease control benefits.

The numbers of badgers removed by cage trapping and controlled shooting in the cull areas in 2016 was published in December 2016.

14 Mar 2017 | Written questions | House of Commons | 67289

[Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control](#)

Asked by: Glindon, Mary

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much her Department has spent on administering badger control measures in each of the last three years.

Answering member: George Eustice | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

In August 2016 the Government published its badger control costs for 2013 -2015. These can be found on the GOV.UK website under Bovine TB Government badger control costs 2015.

The costs for the 2016 badger control operations are still to be finalised and will be published later this year.

14 Mar 2017 | Written questions | House of Commons | 67288

[Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control](#)

Asked by: Flynn, Paul

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many culled badger carcasses have been examined to date; and of those examined how many were found to have (a) been killed outright with one shot and (b) tested positive for TB.

Answering member: George Eustice | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

To date, 421 carcasses of badgers culled by controlled shooting in 2013 – 2016 have undergone post-mortem examination. Of these, 25 were found to have evidence of more than one hit.

Culled carcasses undergoing post-mortem examination have not been routinely tested for TB as the RBCT established that approximately one-third of badgers in areas of high incidence of TB in cattle were infected.

14 Mar 2017 | Written questions | House of Commons | 66627

[Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control](#)

Asked by: Flynn, Paul

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what process is in place to select which culled badger carcasses are forensically examined; and who is responsible for selecting which carcasses will be sent to the cull monitors.

Answering member: George Eustice | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Natural England, as the licensing authority, monitors the culls to assess compliance with licence conditions and Best Practice Guides. If, as part of this, Natural England identifies a compliance issue then Natural England may request that a carcass is subject to a post-mortem examination by exception. This was done on one occasion in 2016.

Additionally, during 2013 to 2015, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) carried out post-mortem examinations of badger carcasses that were dispatched by controlled shooting. Carcasses were selected for examination at random. Further details on monitoring and post-mortem examinations are published on GOV.UK

09 Mar 2017 | Written questions | House of Commons | 66626

[Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control](#)

Asked by: Robertson, Mr Laurence

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the current six week period for carrying out trial badger culls in affected areas.

Answering member: George Eustice | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Defra's Guidance to Natural England (NE) on licences to kill or take badgers for the purpose of disease control published in 2011 specified a duration of 6 weeks. In 2015, to increase the likelihood of achieving a significant reduction of the badger population and thereby disease control, Defra consulted on giving provision to NE to keep the duration of the cull period under review, without specifying in the licence an initial limit on its duration.

In December 2015, Defra published updated Guidance to this effect. The duration of the cull period must achieve a balance between sufficient intensity to achieve disease control and what is realistically deliverable by a cull company.

09 Mar 2017 | Written questions | House of Commons | 66220

[Badgers: Vaccination](#)

Asked by: McCarthy, Kerry

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 28 February 2017 to Question 65348, on badgers: vaccination, what assessment she has made of (a) evidence from Ireland on the effectiveness of oral vaccine baits to vaccinate badgers against TB and (b) the potential effect on the incidence of TB of accelerating the deployment of such vaccines in England.

Answering member: George Eustice | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Defra works on the development of an oral bovine TB vaccine for badgers in partnership with the Irish and French governments, as well as the Devolved Administrations in Wales and Northern Ireland. This is through the form of a joint project board. The study in Ireland, which involved the administering of vaccine directly to anaesthetised badgers, contributed to that partnership work. Work is now being done in preparation for a further study by Defra's Animal and Plant Health Agency later this year to assess the protection from infection that may be achieved through consumption by badgers of a candidate oral vaccine in bait, the results of which will help determine the extent to which such a vaccine may play a part in national TB programmes.

08 Mar 2017 | Written questions | House of Commons | 66430

[Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control](#)

Asked by: Robertson, Mr Laurence

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to encourage people in affected areas to continue badger control beyond the four years of the initial badger culling trials.

Answering member: George Eustice | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

In line with the Chief Veterinary Officer's advice, we consulted on the next steps for badger control in those areas that have successfully completed the first four years of intensive culling, the aim of which will be to continue to protect the hard work of farmers and ensure that the anticipated disease reduction benefits are sustained.

The Chief Veterinary Officer's advice can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-chief-veterinary-officers-advice-on-the-outcome-of-the-2016-badger-culls>.

and further details of the consultation can be found at:

https://consult.defra.gov.uk/bovine-tb/supplementary-badger-disease-control/supporting_documents/Consultation%20Document.pdf.

The consultation closed on 10 February 2017 and the responses that were received are being considered.

07 Mar 2017 | Written questions | House of Commons | 66219

[Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control](#)

Asked by: Robertson, Mr Laurence

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to tackle bovine tuberculosis in high risk areas which have not undergone trial badger culling.

Answering member: George Eustice | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

We are taking strong action to deliver a long-term plan to eradicate the disease and protect the future of the UK's dairy and beef industries. In addition to badger control in areas where TB is rife, our comprehensive strategy includes strengthening cattle testing and movement controls and improving biosecurity on farm and when trading.

A summary of current measures and additional future measures or options is included in the Government's Strategy for achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis Free status for England which can be found on the GOV.UK website.

06 Mar 2017 | Written questions | House of Commons | 66235

[Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control](#)

Asked by: Robertson, Mr Laurence

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with Natural England on the level of resources needed for the roll-out of trial badger culls.

Answering member: George Eustice | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

In order to be able to achieve a successful cull over a full 4 year period, a cull company needs to have funds in place for the equipment and consumables needed, and other related expenses incurred. Natural England, as the licensing authority, works closely with each cull company to help it estimate how much it is likely to need, based on the population estimates and numbers of badgers to be removed, and the size of the cull area. Previous experience is applied to ensure that cull companies are assisted in making accurate estimates, using known actual costs of equipment, consumables and other expenses. Experience shows that a contingency is required in case a cull company starts to run out of money in scenarios where they need to deploy more resources than originally planned, or there are more badgers to remove than originally estimated. Natural England reviews its approach in estimating costs each year.

13 Dec 2016 | Written questions | House of Commons | 56408

[Bovine TB](#)

Asked by: Mr David Hanson (Delyn) (Lab)

Not one single badger was culled in Wales due to the actions of the Welsh Government in supporting vaccination, but they face the same problem as authorities in England: a shortage of the vaccine. What steps is the Minister taking to ensure that we can maximise the use of vaccines in England and Wales?

Oral questions - Supplementary

Answering member: George Eustice | **Department:** Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

I ensured that we continued to have vaccine available for important trial work that we are doing, specifically on developing an oral vaccine that we could deploy on badgers, which could give us an exit strategy from culls, once that was complete. However, the right hon. Gentleman is right: the World Health Organisation has asked people to prioritise use of the available vaccine on humans. It is worth noting that the dose needed for a badger is sometimes 10 times higher than that for an infant, so we have to be careful about how we use the vaccine. That is why we have suspended the use of vaccines for the time being.

13 Oct 2016 | Oral answers to questions | House of Commons | 615 c432

[Bovine TB](#)

Asked by: Mr Philip Hollobone (Kettering) (Con)

How many (a) cattle have been slaughtered and (b) badgers have been culled as a result of efforts to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis since 2010.

Answered by: The Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (George Eustice) | **Department:** Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Between the start of 2010 and the end of 2015, some 160,393 cattle were slaughtered and 3,961 badgers were removed under licence in England to prevent the spread of bovine TB. We will publish figures for 2016 in due course.

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[Bovine Tuberculosis](#)

Asked by: Burden, Richard

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what criteria her Department used to make the decision on new licenses for badger culling in Cornwall, Herefordshire, Devon, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Dorset.

Answering member: George Eustice | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The criteria Natural England uses when assessing applications for licences for the purpose of preventing the spread of bovine tuberculosis under section 10(2)(a) of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 can be found on the gov.uk website at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-natural-england-preventing-spread-of-bovine-tb

12 Sep 2016 | Written questions | House of Commons | 45471

4.2 Ministerial Statements

Bovine TB

Today I am updating the House on the implementation of the Government's 25-year strategy to eradicate bovine TB in England.

The strategy continues to deliver results. Next year we will apply for Officially TB free status in the Low Risk Area of the country where there is no significant TB in wildlife. This will boost trade opportunities and mean some herds require less regular TB testing, reducing costs for farmers and taxpayers. Bovine TB remains the greatest animal health threat to the UK. Dealing with the disease is costing the taxpayer over £100 million each year. Last year alone over 28,000 cattle had to be

slaughtered in England to control the disease, causing devastation and distress for hard-working farmers and rural communities.

The Government is taking strong action to deliver a long-term plan to eradicate the disease and protect the future of our dairy and beef industries. The comprehensive strategy includes strengthening cattle testing and movement controls, improving biosecurity on farm and when trading, and badger control in areas where TB is rife.

There is broad scientific consensus that badgers are implicated in the spread of TB to cattle in the high risk area of England, which also has the highest badger density in Europe and has seen a large increase in badger abundance over the last 20 years. The approach of tackling the disease simultaneously in cattle and in wildlife has worked in Australia, is working in New Zealand and Ireland and is supported by the Government and Defra Chief Scientists, the UK Chief Vet and other leading vets.

This year seven new and three existing licensed badger control operations were delivered by local farmers and landowners in parts of Somerset, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. These areas comprise ten per cent of the high risk area, and all achieved successful outcomes. As part of our 25 year bovine TB eradication strategy I want to see further expansion of operations in the coming years. This is in line with the UK Chief Veterinary Officer's advice on what is needed to realise and maintain disease control benefits at regional level.

I have also today published a consultation on the next steps in areas that have completed the first four years of badger control. I am proposing to allow continued, strictly licensed, activity to stabilise the population at the reduced level. This will ensure the disease reduction benefits in cattle are prolonged for many years to come.

Following consultation earlier this year, the Government intends to make further improvements to TB testing in the High Risk and Edge areas of England and to introduce new arrangements for controlling the disease in non-bovines. Tough controls on cattle and non-bovine farm animals are an essential complement to controlling the disease in wildlife and our plans published today alongside our summary of consultation responses will help us to make further progress on the disease, while not over-burdening our livestock industry.

Effective biosecurity is essential to protect the gains from reinforced cattle controls and badger control so I very much welcome the progress being made in delivering a joint government-industry TB biosecurity action plan. I am pleased that last month's launch of a new bovine TB herd accreditation programme by the Cattle Health Certification Standards body has started to attract herd owners keen to be recognised and rewarded for good biosecurity practices. We will consult next year on proposed incentives to encourage more herd owners to take up this option.

Innovations enabling our farmers to better protect their herds include access to advice on the TB Hub, our interactive map of TB locations and

the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board's list of dairy bulls with greater genetic resistance to TB, alongside farm demonstration events, accredited training for vets and new teaching and training resources for land-based colleges.

Although it does not provide complete protection or cure infected animals which continue to spread TB, badger vaccination has a role to play. We remain committed to promoting vaccination in the Edge Area of England albeit deployment continues to be hampered by a global shortage, meaning deliveries of the authorised vaccine are not expected to resume before 2018. We will start work next year with interested organisations on the design of a new Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme (BEVS) as a replacement to the former scheme which had to be cancelled because of the lack of vaccine.

In the meantime, supplies of vaccine for human immunisation will continue to be prioritised.

To ensure we have a successful and resilient industry as the UK enters a new trading relationship with the world, we are determined to implement all available measures necessary to eradicate this devastating disease as quickly as possible.

Copies of the badger control consultation and the cattle and non-bovine summary of consultation responses have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Andrea Leadsom

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

16 Dec 2016 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS376

4.3 Debates

Westminster Hall

[Badger Culling/Bovine TB](#)

07 September 2016 | Vol 614

5. Useful links and further reading

Defra policy paper: *Bovine TB: Chief Veterinary Officer's advice on the outcome of the 2016 badger culls*, 16 December 2016

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578356/cvo-advice-2016-cull.pdf

Defra policy paper: *Bovine TB: summary of badger control monitoring during 2016*, 16 December 2016

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578436/summary-badger-control-monitoring-2016.pdf

Animal and Plant Health Agency Research and analysis – *Bovine TB: incidence of TB in cattle in licensed badger control areas in 2014 to 2015*, 30 August 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-incidence-of-tb-in-cattle-in-licensed-badger-control-areas-in-2014-to-2015>

Defra – the *Strategy for achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis Free status for England*, April 2014

<http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/files/DEP2014-0554/pb14088-bovine-tb-strategy-140328.pdf>

GOV.UK – Badger culling pilots: independent expert panel

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/badger-culling-pilots-independent-expert-panel>

Independent Expert Panel – *Pilot Badger Culls in Somerset and Gloucestershire*, March 2014

<http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/files/DEP2014-0554/independent-expert-panel-report.pdf>

Defra response: *Pilot Badger Culls in Somerset and Gloucestershire: Report by the Independent Expert Panel*, April 2014

<http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/files/DEP2014-0554/pb14158-defra-response-independent-expert-panel.pdf>

RSPCA, *Why badger culling is not the answer*, August 2016

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/ImageLocator/LocateAsset?asset=document&assetId=1232739398654&mode=prd>

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