

BVA response to Defra

Bovine tuberculosis: consultation on proposals to help eradicate the disease in England

Who we are

1. The British Veterinary Association (BVA) is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United Kingdom. With over 18,000 members, our primary aim is to represent, support and champion the interests of the United Kingdom's veterinary profession.

8. Consequently, g

of a pilot, which must be designed to provide a rigorous evidence base for informing future policy decisions. However, more than a year after the publication of the government's response to the bTB strategy review, our questions on the effectiveness, humaneness and practicality of badger vaccination in the context of the future eradication strategy remain.

15. Government should prioritise research to evaluate the impact of badger vaccination on bTB incidence in cattle. This evidence should provide a greater understanding of this control method as part of any 'exit strategy' or as a firebreak to stop the spread of the disease into new areas. Government should develop this evidence base before moving to remove the option of badger culling.

Proposal 43000sal 4

New Badger Disease Control (intensive cull) licences issued in 2021 and 2022, could, after 2 years of culling, be revoked after a progress evaluation by the CVO.

16. Badger culling should be carried out with the clear objective of reducing the incidence of bTB in cattle. We are concerned that if badger culling is not conducted in a sustained manner, this proposal could result in a smaller benefit, or even a detrimental effect, on the incidence of confirmed bTB in cattle.
17. The proposal, as currently stated, would give significant discretion to the UK Chief Veterinary Officer to determine if licences should be revoked. BVA trusts the expertise and judgement of the CVO to take these decisions using expert veterinary judgement. However, this needs to be done in a transparent way. Currently, no criteria, methodology or direction is suggested within the document as to how the CVO should apply this discretion. To provide clarity, we ask that clearer guidelines are provided for when and how the CVO would be asked to make such a determination and for the rationale for any subsequent decision to be provided.

