

Badger Trust welcomes "no cull" speculation

For immediate release: 4 July 2008

The Badger Trust has welcomed a speculative story from the BBC[1] that the Government plans to rule out a cull of badgers to control bovine TB, on Monday 8 July.

Trevor Lawson, for the Badger Trust, commented:

"A decision against a badger cull would be the right decision, based on sound science, which will allow farmers to move forwards in tackling this disease.

"There is no scientific, economic or practical case for culling badgers to control bovine TB. The most robust research, by the Independent Scientific Group[2], concluded that culling can make no 'meaningful contribution' to TB control. No-one has presented a robust case to challenge that view.

"Professor Sir David King, who last year claimed that culling could make a contribution[3], considered ten years-worth of evidence for just a day with a less expert team. And he failed to consider the costs or practicalities of badger culling.

"Attention must be focused on cattle, the main agents of the disease. The challenges are substantial. We need better and more frequent cattle testing. The current test misses around one in three infected animals. Around 70 per cent of cattle are never tested for TB in their lifetimes. Animal Health [formerly the State Veterinary Service] needs to record the disease on computers rather than on paper and infected cattle need to be removed from farms in days rather than in months."

ENDS

For further information contact Trevor Lawson on 07976 262388.

1. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/7489000.stm>
2. Bourne, F.J., et al., Bovine TB: The Scientific Evidence. Independent Scientific Group Reports, 2007. Final Report.
3. King, D., Bovine tuberculosis in cattle and badgers. A report by the chief scientific adviser, 2007.

Badger Trust is the only charity solely dedicated to the conservation of badgers across Great Britain.

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