

## **Badger TB vaccine project gets cautious welcome from Badger Trust**

For immediate release: 19 March 2009

A field trial of a bovine TB vaccine for badgers has been given a cautious welcome by the Badger Trust.

Commenting on the announcement of a project to test the vaccine's practical application in the field[1], Badger Trust chairman David Williams commented:

"Cattle, not badgers, are the primary reservoir of bovine TB. Nevertheless, badgers are a protected species. Even though the badger culling trial found that barely one per cent of badgers had significant TB infection[2], we hope that this vaccine will give badgers further protection from bovine TB, which continues to be spread by cattle because the TB testing regime is inadequately enforced by Animal Health[3,4].

"The challenge now is to get tough on TB testing so that the real cause of this epidemic - cattle to cattle transmission - can be put into reverse. The science shows it can be done, but it requires real political will to deliver that objective."

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For further comment, contact David Williams on 07768 518064.

Notes to editors:

1. Benn announces deployment of injectable badger vaccine, Defra Press Release, 19 March 2009.

2. Bourne, F.J., et al., Bovine TB: The Scientific Evidence. Independent Scientific Group Reports, 2007. Final Report.

3. On 4 March 2009, the National Audit Office (<http://tinyurl.com/byllqz>) reported that: "The effectiveness of the routine testing regime for Bovine Tuberculosis is undermined by the weakness of existing enforcement arrangements."

4. Half a million cattle are overdue for their TB test, Badger Trust reveals, press release, 5 November 2008.

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

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