



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
www.gov.uk/defra

**Our ref:** RFI 6472

**Date:** 23/04/2013

Dear

### **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: TB Transmission from Wildlife to Cats**

Thank you for your request for information about TB transmission from wildlife to cats, which we received on 31 March. We have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information, which is a broad category of information defined in regulation 2 of the EIRs. Public authorities are required to handle requests for environmental information under the EIRs. They give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The information that you have requested is available from the peer-reviewed findings from the 2013 Newbury TB cluster published in *Veterinary Record* Vol 74 Issue 13 (2014), which can be found on their website:

<http://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/174/13/326.2.full>. The guest editorial (<http://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/174/13/322.full>), and the letter from the Chief Veterinary Officer (<http://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/174/13/331.1.full>) also mention possible routes of disease transmission between infected badgers and cats, and includes several references to peer-reviewed studies of *M. bovis* infections in cats.

These are retrospective case studies that take place several months or years after the infection event. Furthermore, we do not carry out surveillance for TB in badgers. So, by definition, it is almost impossible to prove the original source of *M. bovis* infection for the diseased cats.

It is important to recognise, however, that based on the epidemiology of TB in cats in Great Britain and the areas where these cases emerge, the molecular typing of feline *M. bovis* isolates and the clinical presentation of TB in those cats, the weight of evidence strongly points to a wildlife/environmental source of infection in the majority of cases (rather than contact with cattle), which may subsequently be amplified through cat-to-cat transmission.

I attach an annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service that you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours,

**Defra TB Programme**

[Ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Annex**

### **Complaints**

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: [requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk)) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF