



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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

Our ref: RFI 5967

Date: 2nd December 2013

Dear [REDACTED],

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: BADGER CULL COSTS

Thank you for your request for information about costs of the pilot badger culls and vaccinations, which we received on 3 November. 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).

Your questions and the responses are below. Following careful consideration, we have decided not to disclose some of this information.

I would like to know how much was spent on the original cull, and how much is being and will be spent on the extensions to the cull.

The costs of the pilot culls and the extended cull periods have not yet been finalised and therefore regulation 12(4) (a) (information not held at the time of a request) applies.

Specifically, please provide comprehensive information on costs of:

a) hiring shooters, and who are they (what companies) including (disaggregated) their training (if any) and equipment and expenses

Costs incurred in recruiting and training marksmen and their expenses have been met by the Cull Companies and the NFU who employ them.

b) policing the cull areas, including how many police have been used in both Gloucestershire and Somerset who have come from outside their normal geographical area of employment, and what all the cull policing costs consist of

As both culls have not been finished at the time of writing, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive breakdown of policing costs. The police will complete their detailed cost estimates in due course before submitting any claims to Government.

c) what are the next geographical areas to be culled under the four year plan, and how much they are budgeted to cost?

Ministers have yet to decide on any roll-out of future culls. As such new cull areas and future costs have yet to be decided. This information is withheld under regulation 12(4)(a).

d) how much it costs to vaccinate a badger against BTB (In England and in Wales)?

Badger vaccination entails safely trapping the badger, administering the vaccine, and releasing it. It is an expensive process with the latest estimate of costs in the region of between £2,000 and £4,000 per km². The budget for the Badger Vaccine Deployment Project is £416,000 in 2013/14. Development of an oral badger vaccine which would be simpler to deploy, is still underway so costs are unknown at present.

e) how much it costs to vaccinate a cow against BTB (In England and in Wales)?

A vaccine for cattle is not available therefore the costs are unknown at present.

The Regulation and Public Interest Test

Regulation 12(4)(a) (information not held at the time of the request) is a qualified exception, which usually means that a public authority is required to conduct a public interest test to determine whether or not information should be disclosed or withheld. However, the Information Commissioner, who is the independent regulator for requests made under the EIRs, takes the view that a public interest test in cases where the information is not held would serve no useful purpose. Therefore, in line with the Information Commissioner's view, Defra has not conducted a public interest test in this case.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIRs, and in keeping with the Government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on www.gov.uk together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

I also attach an annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received. If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Defra TB Programme
Email: 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) 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