



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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

Our ref: RFI 5881
Date: 4th November 2013

Dear [REDACTED]

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: PILOT BADGER CULL DATA AND RESULTS

Thank you for your request for badger cull pilot costs, which we received on 7 October. 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 question: what is the exact cost per badger killed in the Somerset Cull including all the peripheral costs of Policing, Administration, Monitoring Social Networks and dealing with the Press?

We don't hold the data in a format that allows us to provide costs in that level of detail. The total costs of the cull incurred by Defra and its agencies are still being calculated. The information you have requested is therefore exempted under regulations 12(4)(a), information is not held when the applicant's request is received, and 12(4)(d), material which is still in the course of completion, unfinished documents or incomplete data.

However, you may find it helpful to see Defra's published 2011 Impact Assessment which provides information on projected costs:

<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/atoz/tb/documents/bovine-tb-impact-assessment.pdf>.



Regulation 12(4)(a)

This exception relates to information which is not held at the time when an applicant's request is received. Regulation 12(4)(a) 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.

Regulation 12(4)(d)

This exception relates to material which is still in the course of completion, unfinished documents or incomplete data, applies to the details of cull costs including the cull extension which are still in the course of completion. Currently the data are still in a raw state and a detailed summary has not been completed. There would be no public interest in disclosing the incomplete data or estimates as this would not meet the purpose of your request which is to ascertain the costs of the pilot cull in Somerset. Estimated figures may change as collating expenses and checking takes place.

This exception also requires the public authority in question to carry out a public interest test. Defra has concluded that the public interest in withholding the information sought outweighs the public interest in its disclosure. Releasing the details of costs now before they've been fully collated and checked and then potentially having to release another set of costs later on would only mislead and confuse the public. It is logical to wait until there is confidence with the figures. There is a strong public interest in deferring disclosure of the information until it is complete.

Defra recognises the strength of feeling around the badger control policy. However, in light of the arguments above, Defra has concluded that, at this stage, when the information is incomplete, the public interest in withholding the information sought outweighs the public interest in its disclosure.

I 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