



[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Your ref:** RFI 6156  
**Date:** 31 January 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Numbers of Tb-infected badgers removed as part of pilot cull areas in 2013**

Thank you for your requests for information about the number of badgers which were removed as part of the two pilot culls in Somerset and Gloucestershire and subsequently tested for Bovine TB, which we received on 14 January. 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).

**1) How many infected/ diseased badgers were culled during the pilot culls and their licence extension periods in Somerset and Gloucestershire Badgers during 2013?**

TB testing in culled badgers was not undertaken as a routine procedure as high levels of TB were confirmed in badgers in the regions in which the cull areas are located during the Randomised Badger Cull Trial (RBCT). This has been confirmed by other research work carried out by independent scientists. A link to the report on the RBCT, which summarises the Trial's results and which contains an accompanying literature review, is below. Pages 72 to 77 will be of particular interest:

[http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/atoz/tb/isg/report/final\\_report.pdf](http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/atoz/tb/isg/report/final_report.pdf)

A sample of culled badgers was subjected to post mortem examination and any signs of illness or poor condition were noted as part of the procedure. It should be noted that testing badger carcasses for TB was not undertaken on a routine basis during the pilot cull. However a very small number of carcasses were tested on occasion at the specific

request of landowners when they were concerned when a culled badger appeared to be in a poor state of health.

The figures are being withheld at present under Environmental Information Regulation 12(5)(c), which relates to intellectual property.

## **2) How is the minister aware that the incidence of TB will be reduced as a result?**

Cattle surveillance data (e.g. TB testing and disease status) and herd demographic data (size, location, etc.) will be used in research projects to measure the impact of culling, which is currently available from the SAM & CTS databases. The project outputs will be in line with the data currently produced for counties in the annual surveillance reports.

### ***The Regulation***

In applying this exception we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure.

We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosure of information concerning the number of badgers tested for TB at the request of landowners. Releasing the information would give an indication of whether badgers culled during the pilots were infected with TB.

On the other hand, there is a strong public interest in withholding the information because releasing the numbers would bias other data collected during the pilot culls, resulting in an unfair picture being presented without taking other data into account.

Therefore, we have concluded that, in all the circumstances of the case, the information should be withheld. However, the data on the number of badger carcasses tested for the presence of TB at the request of landowners will be published at the same time as the Report on the pilot culls produced by the Independent Expert Panel

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](http://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 attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex B 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,

**Defra TB Programme**

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

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## **Annex B**

### **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