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Your ref: RFI 6200
Date: 31 January 2014

Dear ██████████,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Experiments involving Badgers

Thank you for your request for information about experiments involving badgers, which we received on 2 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).

You asked ‘what exactly is happening with these captive badgers and TB testing. Also why have you got 100 captive badgers for testing purposes?’

Testing captive badgers includes the following:

- a) Research on oral TB vaccines for badgers; the purpose of this programme is to look at the efficacy and safety of different oral TB vaccines and determining optimal strategies for bait deployment in wild badgers. These studies also provide samples used to develop and optimise diagnostic assays for TB.
- b) Badger Immunocontraceptives; the purpose of this programme is determine whether an injectable contraceptive can reduce urban badger reproduction and associated sett expansion thereby reducing damage to property.

One hundred badgers are retained as this is the optimal number for research purposes. Animals are maintained to rigorous standards to satisfy the Home Office (Animals (Scientific Procedures Act) 1986) and AHVLA's Ethics Committee with respect to animal health and welfare. There is on-going monitoring to ensure these standards are being upheld and positive refinements are introduced where possible.

For your information, there are other procedures which involve working with badgers in the wild.

- c) Field approaches to identifying *Mycobacterium bovis* infection in badger populations; the purpose of this programme is to gather test data and samples for diagnostic test development from a well-studied wild badger population.

- d) A study to examine the interactions between cattle and badgers; the purpose of this project is to look at where and when badgers and cattle come in contact with each other on farms.

Further information on different research projects can be found at the links below:

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=ProjectList&Completed=2&AUID=1262>

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=ProjectList&Completed=0&AUID=1263>

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=ProjectList&Completed=0&AUID=1264>

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