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Our ref: RFI 6244
Date: 25 February 2014

Dear ██████████,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Levels of TB in Badgers

Thank you for your request for information about levels of TB in badgers, which we received on 29 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 had noted that in his reply to Roger Godsiff MP on 28 January 2014, as reported in Hansard, George Eustice stated that high levels of TB were confirmed in badgers in the regions in which the cull areas are located during the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT). You asked to be referred to where this is confirmed in the report of the Independent Scientific Group (ISG) following the RBCT.

You also asked to be referred to the other research work carried out by independent scientists which confirms this statement.

High levels of TB were confirmed in badgers in the regions in which the cull areas were 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 final report on the RBCT prepared by the ISG, 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

Further information on the ISG and RBCT can be found at:

<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/atoz/tb/isg/>

I have also attached a link to an annex which was published as part of the 2010 consultation 'Bovine tuberculosis: the Government's approach to tackling the disease and consultation on a badger control policy'. The annex contains more information on badgers and TB:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110203030352/http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/tb-control-measures/100915-tb-control-measures-annexa.pdf>

It should be noted that the members of the ISG were independent scientists. There are references to research into TB and badgers at the back of the report. More recent papers are shown below.

The long term prevalence of TB in badgers in Woodchester Park in Gloucestershire which is in the region where the culls are located, is discussed in this article:

R. J. Delahay, N. Walker, G. S. Smith, D. Wilkinson, R. S. Clifton-Hadley, C. L. Cheeseman, A. J. Tomlinson and M. A. Chambers (2013). Long-term temporal trends and estimated transmission rates for *Mycobacterium bovis* infection in an undisturbed high-density badger (*Meles meles*) population. *Epidemiology and Infection*, 141, pp 1445-1456. doi:10.1017/S0950268813000721.

Studies on the injectable badger vaccine in a separate area of Gloucestershire also found TB in wild badgers:

Bacillus Calmette-Guérin vaccination reduces the severity and progression of tuberculosis in badgers. Chambers et al. *Proc Biol Sci*. 2011 Jun 22;278(1713):1913-20. doi: 10.1098/rspb.2010.1953. Epub 2010 Dec.

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 have attached 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