

Badger culling pilots: independent expert panel

Terms of reference

To help Ministers evaluate the effectiveness (in terms of badger removal) and humaneness of controlled shooting the independent expert panel will:

- a. oversee the development of scientifically robust and policy-relevant monitoring protocols;
- b. advise on appropriate auditing of data collection and analysis (either by panel members or by the independent auditor);
- c. On completion of the cull and where appropriate:
 - i. provide advice to Ministers comprising their view of the robustness of the data collection and analysis conducted by the research teams, and a discussion of factors that may have influenced the results obtained;
 - ii. advise on other factors of scientific relevance that are material to the monitoring of effectiveness (in terms of badger removal) and humaneness of controlled shooting, and recommend (if appropriate) options for monitoring if the policy is rolled out more widely;
 - iii. consider the report on the public safety of controlled shooting following the pilots and other information that may arise regarding operator safety, and
 - iv. recommend any changes or improvements to the licence criteria, training course content, or Best Practice Guidance.

It is not the role of the panel to provide advice or to comment on the wider policy approach to tackling bovine TB in England, or on the case for badger culling as part of a comprehensive package of measures. This has already been the subject of extensive public consultation which has informed the Government's policy decision. The panel has been appointed specifically to look at the effectiveness, humaneness and safety of controlled shooting as a culling method.

August 2013