



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

T: 03459 33 55 77 or
08459 33 55 77
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Our ref: RFI 7114

9 January 2015

Dear [REDACTED],

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Use of the Chembio Inc. Dual Path Platform VetB (DPP) Test on Badgers (*Meles meles*)

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on 15 December about use of the Chembio Inc. Dual Path Platform VetB (DPP) test on Badgers. We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Your questions and the responses are below.

I understand from DARDNI that APHA are evaluating the use of the Chembio Inc. Dual Path Platform VetB (DPP) test on badgers. Please provide the following information:

- 1. Details of the scope of the evaluation including but not limited to: the project description, project start date, scheduled project finish date, any interim/final evaluation reports produced, planned date for final evaluation report and project cost estimate.**

The project's reference number and description are SE3281: Research and development towards novel field-based approaches to the diagnosis of bovine tuberculosis in badgers.

The project started on 2 April 2012 and is scheduled to finish on 1 September 2015 when a final evaluation report will be prepared. No interim reports have been produced. The estimated cost of the project is approximately £900,000.

- 2. Future use of the DPP or a similar test: is it the intention (subject to successful evaluation) to use this test as part of a TVR (test, vaccinate or remove) policy as part of the UK Bovine TB Eradication Plan?**

And

- 3. What performance specification (including sensitivity and specificity) should the test meet to allow its use in any Defra TVR project?**

And

- 4. What is the "total cost of use" target for such a test to qualify as cost effective?**

Defra's approach to badger control is set out in the Strategy for Achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis Free Status published in April 2014:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/300447/pb14088-bovine-tb-strategy-140328.pdf



In the foreword to the Strategy, the then Secretary of State set out a vision for targeted intervention on infected badgers:

“We will also continue to invest in the development of improved diagnostic tests for both cattle and badgers such as DNA-based technologies. My goal is to move to a position whereby we have the tools to enable us to deploy a targeted approach, identifying and removing only TB-infected badgers either at individual or sett level.”

No specific performance threshold has been set for a test to identify infected badgers that might be used in any future badger control approach. The required test performance can change under different approaches. All new tests aim to maximise both sensitivity and specificity.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) are carrying out an informal evaluation of how the DPP test compares with the discontinued Statpak test, so that we can properly interpret diagnostic test results for future research purposes on badgers and TB. This involves carrying out DPP tests in parallel with existing diagnostic tests in the context of longitudinal badger / TB field studies.

As no delivery model has been developed, we have not looked at the cost-effectiveness of new diagnostic tests.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA and 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 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 the address below.

Yours sincerely,




Defra FOIA and EIRs Team
InformationRequests@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) 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