



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
www.gov.uk/defra

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Our ref:** RFI 6500

**Date:** 07 May 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Bovine TB in the pilot cull areas**

Thank you for your request for information about Bovine TB in the pilot areas, which we received on 08 April. 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 the following questions:

**1) Please can you give me all details of post mortems of every single badger in the pilot cull zones. How many did you test for TB?**

**&**

**2) Please can you send me information regarding any tests or knowledge undertaken to know for certain that badgers are causing BTB in Gloucestershire and Somerset. Have you any established knowledge of infected setts?**

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, four 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 tests were carried out by independent veterinary surgeons away from the main laboratory where the routine post-mortems were carried out. Of the four carcasses, one carcass was found to be infected with Bovine TB. Please note that the sample size of four is very small and the results from the tests should be treated with caution.

**3) Please can you let me know the total number of cases of BTB in the badger cull pilot zones, Gloucester and Somerset since September 2013 to the present day.**

Although we publish monthly data at county level on GOV.UK (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/incidence-of-tuberculosis-tb-in-cattle-in-great-britain>), we currently do not hold data at this level of detail for the cull areas at the present time. This is therefore information not held at time of the request under 12(4)(a) of the EIRs.

The information is therefore exempt under regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIRs, which relates to information which is not held at the time when an applicant's request is received. Regulation 12(4)(a) is a qualified exception, which usually means that a public authority is required to conduct a public interest test to determine whether or not information should be disclosed or withheld. However, the Information Commissioner, who is the independent regulator for requests made under the EIRs, takes the view that a public interest test in cases where the information is not held would serve no useful purpose. Therefore, in line with the Information Commissioner's view, Defra has not conducted a public interest test in this case.

I 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,

Defra TB Programme

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