



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

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[REDACTED]
{By Email}

Our Ref: ATIC2062

30 June 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

PROVISION OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information on Whole Genome sequencing which we received on 12 June 2020. Your request has been handled under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004(EIR).

The information you requested and our response is detailed below:

This is a follow on request from APHA's response to a previous request ATIC2032.

"I would be most grateful if you could provide clarity as regards the following responses:

Q1: "Please describe the weight of evidence used to come to this conclusion and what scientific evidence was used"

A : In addition to a) and b) above, the results of Whole Genome Sequence (WGS) analysis of isolates from confirmed bTB breakdowns in the area has also been used for this attribution.

Please can you explain how WGS helps with confirming wildlife attribution if there is limited information on the level of TB in badgers in the area and limited WGS in badger isolates? Can you give me an example of how this works in practice to lead to a wildlife attribution?"

WGS data helps to determine the degree of genetic relatedness between isolates from confirmed bTB breakdowns in the area. It therefore can help to differentiate between locally-occurring and introduced infection. In respect of incidents of locally-occurring infection all available evidence (including, but not limited to, results of detailed on farm disease investigation, local disease situation and trends, WGS data, cattle movement data,) is considered. Wildlife sources are considered to be possible or likely in those incidents where, following consideration of all available evidence, non-wildlife sources and infection pathways are considered to be unlikely or implausible.

Q.3:"Results obtained from Defra-funded survey for bovine TB in road-killed badgers?"

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

A : The results of the Defra-funded found dead badger survey conducted by the University of Nottingham in 2016/17 to look for the presence of M. bovis in badgers in Edge Area counties were taken into consideration.

Please can I have the results of the study for Notts and Leic counties so that I am able to analyze the data accordingly.

d) "Has spoligotyping been performed and this used to map the spread of the bacteria and determine whether the same strains of bTB are circulating within badgers and cattle in the area?"

Yes.

Please supply the results of your work including the mapping which demonstrates the finding of similar spoligotyping in badgers and cattle in this area.

With reference to question 3 this work was generated by Defra funded studies conducted by universities. The information has been excepted from release citing regulation 12(4)(d) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

If a request relates to material that is still being completed, unfinished documents including drafts, or incomplete data, you can refuse to provide the information under regulation 12(4)(d).

This exception requires a Public interest Test please see below;

Public Interest Test

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).

Regulation 12(4)(d) of the EIRs relates to material that is still in the course of completion, unfinished documents and incomplete data. In respect of these data, APHA and external bodies are still in the process of finalising the work. It is APHA's intention to publish the data as soon as possible after the aforementioned has concluded.

In applying this exception, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. APHA recognises that there is a public interest in understanding the work of Government and the accountability there may be. We also understand that information in relation to bovine TB surveillance in cattle and wildlife is an extremely debatable subject and providing such information would show the transparency of Government decisions. However, releasing information before all of the data has been collated and verified and reports have been fully reviewed and finalised would likely mislead the public, if they have to be revised as part of the process. This

includes establishing whether any further work is necessary before drawing the data to a close. This would not be in the public interest. Moreover, as mentioned above, APHA will be publishing in due course and so there would not be any further public interest to be served by early disclosure of the information which will be available to all interested parties in due course.

Given the importance of publishing only appropriately collated and quality checked data, it is reasonable to expect that this information should be published in line with accepted practice rather than disclosed before official publication.

Information disclosed in response to this EIR request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIR and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on GOV.UK, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

An Annex is attached which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you and contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Access to Information Team at the email address below. During the current Coronavirus outbreak, our offices will be closed.

Yours sincerely

ACCESS TO INFORMATION TEAM

Email: enquiries@apha.gov.uk

Annex

Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can also be used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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Copyright in other documents may rest with a third party. For information about obtaining permission from a third party see the [Intellectual Property Office's website](#).

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 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to the Access to Information Manager at the address at the top of this letter or email enquiries@apha.gov.uk and the team will arrange for an internal review of your case.

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's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted APHA's own complaints procedure. The ICO can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Coronavirus

However, following the changes to Government advice, from Tuesday 24 March 2020 the ICO offices will be closed. They will therefore not be able to collect correspondence sent via post. Where possible, they ask that you [contact them online](#) or call on 0303 123 1113