

Subject:

RE: OFF SEN: BTB - No10 Commission

From: Middlemiss, Christine

Sent: 30 August 2019 08:50

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>; PS, George Eustice <[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>; Boyd, Ian <[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>; Baynham-Hughes, Gareth <[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>

Cc: Jobshare, Bosworth-Daykin <[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@apha.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@apha.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: OFF SEN: BTB - No10 Commission

All,

I will send actual sub comments in a wee while (appointment to keep) but here is my view on approach to balance stopping culls with becoming TB free – find a way to not worsen disease whilst accepting time to reduction will be slower.

What we know:

- We cannot get to bovine TB free without reducing the level of disease to below a self-sustaining level in badgers.
- We can do this by reducing the total of number of badgers
- We can do this by protecting uninfected badgers so they don't get disease
- We can protect badgers in 2 ways through vaccination, or biosecurity.
- With current tools reducing badger numbers is most effective and quickest – we have evidence that this is working
- Vaccination to be effective in the population will take a long time, cost a huge amount of resource. We have lots of evidence gaps still to be able to detail these aspects specifically.
- Biosecurity alone to prevent badger infection would need to significantly deviate from usual management practices and public perception of how they like dairy cows should be kept

To date the roll out of the cull within the HRA has been based on areas where cull companies are ready and able to meet licence conditions (within the total number of areas that NE/APHA can resource). So there is likely still areas where we would want to cull but have not yet done so. To my mind these are the 2nd most urgent areas to find a solution for. The most urgent areas in which to cull are those areas which are 1 - 4 years into culling.

So from an entirely disease control perspective a phased approach would be best. The objective being not to worsen disease anywhere but accept that progression to control/eradication will be slower:

1. Next year stop culling in SBCs i.e. after have done 4 years of intensive culling) and move to vaccination
2. Only licence new culls in the HRA – the current HRA and edge area in terms of prevalence should be reviewed as those areas which are culling are now becoming a separate epi group., (This I know goes against my previous view on culling in the edge which I still think in absence of effective vaccination is the best way to get us to eradication the most quickest)
3. Vaccination in bordering area of LRA and edge area – we need to extent free area and push inwards
4. Retain option to cull in LRA hotspots based on WGS, badger disease surveillance and a consideration of time to badger protection from vaccination versus potential disease

spread/increased incidence i.e. time to get below self-sustaining. We would want to refine hot-spot policy so we identify and act as soon as we can so that vaccination has the potential to be as effective as it could be without resorting to culling, but I wouldn't want to commit to no hot-spot culling ever.

How long is it likely to take us to have done the 4 year cycle of culling in remaining true HRA area? That for me is ideally when we stop culling.

It will of course challenge us even more to get to eradication in the 25 year strategy and we would need to be robust in implementing all the other tools and this couldn't be done without significant resource requirement.

Christine Middlemiss
UK CVO

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 August 2019 17:10
To: PS, George Eustice <[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>; Middlemiss, Christine <[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>; Boyd, Ian <[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>; Baynham-Hughes, Gareth <[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>
Cc: Jobshare, Bosworth-Daykin <[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]@apha.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]@apha.gov.uk>
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Hi all,

As you know, we've been asked to develop two products on BTB for No10. These need to be submitted to Ministers by 12pm tomorrow. The first product (attached) addresses No10's request for advice on "how we can announce that the UK will stop the culling of badgers, while becoming bovine TB free, and by when?" The second (to follow, from [REDACTED], shortly) is an analysis of options for the proposed cull area in Derbyshire to inform a decision on whether to proceed. We'd be very grateful for early comments. By 10am tomorrow at the very latest please.

[REDACTED] – with the No10 commission, we're trying to balance honest advice on what is best for disease control while engaging constructively with the strong steer from the centre that a change of policy is needed. It would be good to get your sense of whether we've got the balance right.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

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