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[Redacted]

By email: [Redacted]

Our ref: EIR2021/00098
26 January 2021

Dear [Redacted]

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Badger Cull in Cumbria

Thank you for your request for information of 4 January 2020 about contributions to the cost of the badger cull in Cumbria. 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).

Your information request and our response are set out below.

Q1. Whether the farmers in Cumbria contribute to the cost of the badger cull in that area? And if so how much for each year of the cull.

Q2. What is the total yearly cost of the cull in Cumbria since it began?

Regarding part 1, the information that you have requested is not held by Defra. The current culling policy is industry-led therefore participants i.e. farmers will contribute financially to the badger culling operation in Cumbria. However, financial contributions by individual farmers are a commercial matter between the participants and the cull company.

Regarding part 2, we do not hold information on the total yearly cost of the cull in Cumbria as we do not hold the information requested under part 1.

The information requested under Questions 1 and 2 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's Office (ICO), 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 ICO's view, Defra has not conducted a public interest test in this case.



Q3. What evidence there is demonstrating that badgers have passed the disease to cattle in Cumbria

Regarding part 3, the link below covers a recent paper regarding TB surveillance in Wildlife in the Low Risk Area hotspots that includes Cumbria and illustrates how the disease is linked between badgers and cattle:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/914655/tb-surveillance-in-wildlife-sept2020.pdf

As the information you have requested is already publicly available and easily accessible to you in another form or format, regulation 6(1)(b) of the EIRs exempts Defra from providing a copy of the information with this response to your request

We attach Annex 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

[Redacted]

Information Rights Team

InformationRequests@defra.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 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to [Redacted], Head of Information Rights via email at InformationRequests@defra.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's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure.

The ICO's offices are currently closed so please visit their website on how to contact them during this period, here:

<https://ico.org.uk>

Additionally if you wish to make a complaint to the ICO please use the following link:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/official-information-concerns-report/official-information-concern/>