

Dorset Badger Vaccination Project (DBVP)

To all Farmers and Land-Owners in Dorset,

I'm sure you are well aware of the current badger culling trials in the southwest and the government have made no secret of their intention to extend this culling to other parts of the country and have specifically mentioned Dorset. There appears to be considerable support for this within some parts of the farming community but we urge you to seriously consider both the costs and implications of supporting such a scheme. The present culling has generated a huge amount of ill feeling and disruption within rural communities, not only as a result of the protests but there are farmers both inside and around the culling areas who are strongly opposed to it.

Badger vaccination has been shown to be very effective; according to the latest Government research project most uninfected animals develop full immunity; infected animals are less likely to pass on the infection and cubs pick up immunity from their mothers.

Badgers are considered to be one source of bovine TB (bTB) infection in cattle, so in order to be able to control or eradicate the disease in cattle we acknowledge that we have to deal with the infection in badgers.

Who are we?

The 'Dorset Badger Vaccination Project' (DBVP) is a group of volunteers who offer badger vaccination as an affordable alternative to culling. As professionally trained vaccinators we are already helping Dorset farmers, cattle and wildlife in the battle against bTB. **DBVP** has people who have been trained by the DEFRA-funded Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) in the trapping, vaccination and release of badgers.

WE ARE OFFERING A POSITIVE ALTERNATIVE TO BADGER CULLING TO FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS IN DORSET.

Not all farmers and landowners realise that vaccination is an alternative to culling and that farmers in a cull zone are not obliged to join in the cull.

All vaccination carried out by **DBVP** will be 'at cost'. Although it is early days in our fund-raising programme, we can clearly state that all training, equipment, time, travel costs etc. will be borne by **DBVP**; the land owner will only have to pay for the cost of the vaccine itself which we can, at the moment, estimate to be about £20 per successfully vaccinated badger.

Studies by researchers at AHVLA and the Food & Environment Research Agency (FERA) produced three key findings:

1. **The vaccine is completely safe.** It is the one that was used to vaccinate British school children.
2. **There is no risk to cattle or other non-target species from vaccinated badgers.** The vaccine does **not** interfere with stock testing for bTB.
3. **The vaccine works.** Vaccination of a naturally infected population of over 800 badgers in Gloucestershire resulted in a 74% reduction in badgers testing positive to bTB which compares with a 50% overall reduction of TB in vaccinated humans.

Ten years of British science (Randomised Badger Cull Trial) revealed that "**culling badgers can actually increase the incidence of bTB in cattle**" by increasing the perturbation of badgers.

For further information please see;

- General Info for farmers - <http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla-en/files/pub-advice-tb-cattle-wildlife.pdf>
- AHVLA FAQs (as mentioned above) - <http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla-en/files/vaccinationFAQs.pdf>