

## Somerset Badger Group Press Release 04/2023

Somerset Badger Group is extremely saddened to hear of the death of a further 33,627 badgers killed across the country last year in the governments licenced badger culls.

We recognise that bovine tuberculosis (bTB) is a devastating disease, causing hardship and distress to farmers and costing the lives of tens of thousands of cattle each year but there is no scientific evidence to show that culling badgers has had any effect on the spread of TB in cattle<sup>1</sup>.

Somerset Badger Group has been supporting farmers since 2012 by offering badger vaccination as a humane and cost effective alternative to culling and has successfully vaccinated over 800 badgers since it began.

We welcome the government's recognition that badger vaccination can have a part to play and that it is now supporting badger vaccination initiatives, including offering free badger vaccination to farmers in some post intensively culled areas<sup>2</sup>. Sadly this is too late for the 19,286 badgers killed in Somerset over the last 10 years.

It is vital the government continue its commitment to producing a deployable cattle vaccine by 2025<sup>3</sup> to have any significant impact on the spread of this disease. Until then, more accurate TB testing of cattle, enhanced bio-security measures, stricter cattle movement controls and, in the short term, the vaccination of badgers on a wider scale, would be more effective in controlling the spread of bTB.

Somerset Badger Group continues to support farmers by offering low cost badger vaccination as an alternative to culling, but cattle vaccination must remain the government's priority if this cattle disease is going to be tackled effectively.

For more information on badger vaccination please visit our website <https://www.somersetbadgers.org.uk/#badger-vaccination> or please contact [vaccinations@somersetbadgers.org.uk](mailto:vaccinations@somersetbadgers.org.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> British Veterinary Association, VetRecord, Analysis of the impact of badger culling on bovine tuberculosis in cattle in the high-risk area of England, 2009-2020:  
<https://bvajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/vetr.1384>

<sup>2</sup> TBHub, Vaccination of Badgers against TB:  
<https://tbhub.co.uk/tb-in-wildlife/tb-in-badgers/vaccination-of-badgers-against-tb/>

<sup>3</sup> TBHub, Development of a Deployable Tuberculosis Vaccine for Cattle:  
<https://tbhub.co.uk/resources/frequently-asked-questions/development-of-a-deployable-tuberculosis-vaccine-for-cattle/>