



Gwent Wildlife Trust

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Badgers and Bovine TB

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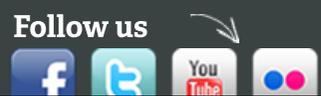
The first badger to be found infected with bovine TB was a road casualty animal in Gloucestershire in 1971. Over the intervening 40 years there has been a remorseless increase in the number of cattle that have tested positive for the disease. The consequence of the bTB for affected farmers has been financial trauma, unwanted distraction and psychological pressure.

The scientific evidence suggests that cattle can get bTB from direct or indirect contact with badgers, or other wild animals. It is not know what proportion of bTB in cattle arises from badgers, but estimates range from 20% to 50%. There is also evidence of cattle to badger transmission in parts of England to which cattle were moved from bTB infected areas during re-stocking following foot and mouth disease.

Gwent Wildlife Trust along with the other Wildlife Trusts are keen for the farming community, conservation organisations and the Government to continue to work together to confront this disease.

Our key asks in Wales

- To maintain and continue to strengthen biosecurity and cattle testing procedures currently in place in Wales
- To prioritise the development of an effective and cost-efficient oral mechanism to deliver badger vaccine
- To work towards a greater and more reliable supply of badger BCG vaccine to ensure badger vaccination can be



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The Wildlife Trusts position in Wales:

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The Wildlife Trusts are very conscious of the hardship that bovine TB (bTB) causes in the farming community and the need to find the right mechanisms to control the disease. However, we believe that a badger cull is not the answer.

The Wildlife Trusts in Wales support Welsh Government in its policy of working towards tighter cattle controls, greater biosecurity and badger vaccination. We will contribute to its delivery of badger vaccination in the IAA and through vaccination of badgers on Wildlife Trust property where appropriate and possible. We also support Welsh Government in its work towards cattle vaccination and an oral vaccine for badgers.

Gwent Wildlife Trust have been directly supporting a study looking at how to deliver an oral BCG vaccine to badgers by hosting the mobile laboratories of the AHVLA at our Pentwyn Farm nature reserve. The study required the live capture of badgers for a 2-4 week period between July and September 2014 to determine how many of the resident badgers had consumed various biomarked bait types. Badgers were removed in holding cages to a nearby location so that blood samples could be taken (under anaesthetic) to detect the biomarker. In addition, any badgers caught were BTB vaccinated before release and our badgers were included within the study from the start. The Vets running the study were well versed in humane badger trapping for scientific purposes, animals will be maintained within social groups, and the laboratories will have 24hr supervision to address any animal welfare concerns. We hope this work could prove vital in increasing the efficiency and reliability of a BCG vaccine for badgers – and will therefore play an important role against any calls for a badger cull in the future here in Wales.

For further information from the Welsh Assembly on bovine TB please follow this link; www.wales.gov.uk/bovinetb

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