



Chief Scientific adviser recommends badger cull

22 October 2007

The Badger Trust today ridiculed Prof David King, Chief Scientific Adviser to the government for recommending badger culling to control bovine TB in cattle. The recommendation comes without any consideration of the cost involved which makes a mockery the entire policy [1].

The Badger Trust is also shocked that this review was conducted in secret and involved advice from the Republic of Ireland where 30 years of badger culling have left Eire with twice the level of bTB in the national herd compared to that found in Great Britain. [2] Trevor Lawson public affairs advisor to Badger Trust commented: " Prof King's list of recommendations repeat virtually word for word the opinions of farming unions and the cull mad vets in Defra. This is a highly-politicised rush to judgment, which, ludicrously, contains no cost benefit analysis.

"Prof King says his aim is to control bTB in cattle but he ignores the fact that this can be achieved by improving the cattle testing regime. The science shows that cattle are the primary source of infection for both each other and for badgers but this is of no interest to Prof King. His shallow report amounts to a shamelessly one sided examination of the problem."

The Badger Trust points out that Prof King's advice contradicts:

- the advice of Prof Sir John Krebs who recently told Lord Rooker, Animal Health Minister, that there was "no wriggle room on bovine TB policy and that badger culling was not viable; [3]
- the advice of Defra Science Advisory Council who for two years have accepted the scientific research first published in 2005 and concluded that badger culling should not be considered until all possible cattle measures had been implemented successfully and in full. [4] The Independent Scientific Group advises that TB can be rapidly reversed and brought under control by improving the cattle testing regime which currently misses around 1 in 3 infected cattle leaving them to infect other cattle in the herd.

Ends

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Notes to Editors:

1. www.dius.gov.uk/publications.html Bovine tuberculosis in cattle and badgers: a report by the chief scientific adviser, Sir David King. 22 October, 2007

- 2 http://www.badgertrust.org.uk/_Attachments/Resources/12_S4.pdf Ireland's bloody shame'
3. Krebs, J. House of Lords debate, Hansard 26 July 2007 : Column 906
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200607/ldhansrd/text/70726-0001.htm
4. [SAC-TB (05) 4 Final report: Independent review of research on bovine tuberculosis]