National TB Conference

A collaborative approach towards a TB free future

29th November 2023
Sixways Stadium, Worcester

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Welcome

The TB Advisory Service is proud to be hosting the National TB Conference 2023. We welcome you to the conference as a unique opportunity to bring together all those involved in TB Control ensuring a collaborative approach towards a bTB free future. We thank you for taking the time to be part of it; our sponsors, speakers and our audience, without whom we would not have an event.

Sarah Tomlinson
TB Advisory Technical Director
Kingshay Veterinary Consultant

The TB Advisory Service (TBAS) is delighted to host a conference dedicated to the people involved in eradicating TB. TBAS has, thanks to the hard work of our veterinary advisers and engaged farmers, become a trusted brand for honest, evidence based, practical TB advice. We use the opportunity that we have on farm, in meetings and in the public arena, to highlight what private vets and farmers are doing to reduce the risk of a TB breakdown. Over 1,500 farmers have taken up the offer of a FREE (Defra funded) farm visit since October 2021, delivered by over 370 vets from over 140 practices, across 48 different counties within England.

The visit offers four bespoke TB biosecurity recommendations agreed on farm to be completed within three to six months. To date, the positive feedback is demonstrated by farmers having completed, started or intend to start soon 83% of recommendations.

We would like to thank our Gold sponsor, IDEXX, for their enthusiasm towards our idea to bring everybody together to talk about TB, as without them we would not all be here today. Please do take the opportunity to visit their stand and our other sponsors and exhibitors who are supporting us today.

The top five recommendations to be completed on farm are:

1. Use the ibTB website to assess pre-purchase risk of incoming stock
2. Install wildlife cameras
3. Use badger-proofed mineral licks
4. Use the ibTB website to assess risk from local area
5. Isolate setts from stock

As you talk to fellow delegates you will hopefully appreciate the vast experience we have in the room; those caught up in the devastation of dealing with TB on farm, to the vets and approved TB testers delivering TB testing on behalf of the government, caught in between doing official government work for clients and businesses they almost always know and are already invested in through day to day clinical work. Also here today are many other people involved in TB control. Please use the opportunity to understand the perspective of others and that we are all people doing our jobs to improve UK agriculture.

TB is such an emotive subject and not necessarily because of the obvious reasons around badger control, but because it hurts people and impacts their livelihoods. Farming isn't just a business, but also includes people's homes, families and staff, generations of hard work, which is put in jeopardy when TB threatens. This conference aims to champion what has been achieved by people working together, highlighting the successes of TB control locally and where APHA has worked together with local stakeholders, trying to bridge the gap between policy makers and those having to deliver and work under the rules.

TB is very personal to me. I have been a farm vet for over 22 years, working closely with farmers I have become part of a local community which has struggled with TB. Finally we have some light at the end of the tunnel with the number of new breakdowns in England at the lowest level for over 15 years. We need to ensure the right policies are co-designed for the next 15 years and bring everyone along with us to keep the current momentum going.

Here at TBAS, we are dedicated to sharing the science and evidence to vets and farmers, trying to help them understand the role everyone has to play in TB control. The important message is that we all have something in common: a shared goal, to eradicate bovine TB and ensure a thriving sustainable livestock industry.

I hope you find the content today valuable, thought provoking and that it gives you some confidence that we will be TB free by 2038. (I hope so as I would like to retire by then!)

Sarah

Sarah Tomlinson and the TBAS Team

WIFI AVAILABLE

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TBAS The TB Advisory Service

The TB Advisory Service is a DEFRA funded project that offers FREE, bespoke, practical and cost-effective advice to all eligible farmers in England to help reduce the risks associated with TB. Keepers in England of a TB susceptible species with a CPH number are eligible.

TBAS TB ADVISORY SERVICE | Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

TBAS offers free on farm visits to farmers that are often delivered by their own private vet. Where the keepers own PVS is not a trained TBAS adviser, we have a team of independent advisers who can help. The service consists of two on farm visits 3 - 6 months apart. The adviser will ask about the keepers farm set up, the concerns they may currently have regarding TB, and issues the keeper may face in the future. They then have a walk around the farm buildings and fields to better understand the current situation. Throughout the visit the adviser will identify potential areas where TB risk could be eliminated or reduced, discussing why these are risks and how to control them. At the end of the visit the keeper and adviser agree on four recommendations to help reduce the risk of TB in the keepers herd or flock. The follow up visit is delivered three to six months later to assess what recommendations have been completed and what was involved in completing them including the time and monetary costs associated with each.

The TBAS adviser is there to help and is not there to make judgement. The idea is the keeper and the TBAS adviser can look at TB as an infectious disease and the recommendations are the start of an action plan to reduce the risk and length of a TB breakdown. There is no penalty for not completing the recommendations, however typical feedback we have had is “why wouldn’t you”. Many of the recommendations are “no-regrets” which means they should not involve a large financial or time commitment.

The TB Advisory Service also run a free telephone advice line managed by experienced advisers who are there to help answer any TB biosecurity queries keepers may have.

One of the four bespoke recommendations given in the TBAS visit may be that further information is needed about the badger activity on farm. In which case there is extra funding available for a sett survey. TBAS have specialist advisers trained in badger ecology to carry out these surveys.

TBAS is delivered by Farmcare Solutions Limited, a joint venture between VetPartners Limited, Obligace Limited, Independent Vetcare Limited (IVC) and UK Farmcare Limited. The project represents over 488 veterinary practices, 6,500 veterinary surgeons and 42 veterinary technicians in England, providing farm animal veterinary services to 60% of all cattle holdings in England.

Project management and practical delivery of the service is provided by Kingshay and UK Farmcare Ltd.

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Contact TBAS today for FREE biosecurity advice or to book your FREE on farm visit.

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For industry and technical enquiries please contact:

T: 01458 851555 **E: admin@tbas.org.uk** **W: tbas.org.uk**

Conference Agenda

A collaborative approach towards a TB free future

TBAS TB ADVISORY SERVICE | Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Time	Topic	Speaker
09:00	Registration and refreshments	
	10:00 Morning Session Sponsored by IDEXX	
10:00	TB eradication strategy 10 years in. What have we achieved?	Lord Benyon, Defra Minister of State
10:30	Working collaboratively to achieve a TB free future	Dr Ruth Little, DEFRA
11:00	Co-design of future policies including cattle vaccination	Professor James Wood, bTB Partnership
11:30	Panel discussion Q & A	Bridget Taylor, BCVA President Tom Bradshaw, NFU Deputy President James Wood, bTB Partnership Dr Ruth Little, DEFRA Dr Christoph Egli, IDEXX Director Associate of Medical Affairs Ele Brown, DEFRA
	12:00 - 13:30 Lunch	
13:30	TB control at a local level	Helen Forrester, NFU County Advisor Brendan Griffin, Pembrokeshire bTB Project Chris Addison, Cumbrian Dairy Farmer Tony Roberts, APHA
14:00	A collaborative approach to managing a TB breakdown Sponsored by Enferplex	Keith Cutler, Synergy Farm Health
14:30	Panel discussion Q & A	Local Stakeholders
	15:00 Break & Refreshments	
15:30	Why should we care for a TB free future?	Dr Jude McCann and Stephen Dennis ARAgS Farming Community Network
16:00	Summary & close	Abi Reader, Welsh Dairy Farmer and NFU Cymru Deputy President
	16:30 Finish & Depart	

All sessions will be chaired by Sarah Tomlinson, TBAS Technical Director and Kingshay Veterinary Consultant

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IDEXX

Laboratories, clinics and veterinarians around the world depend on IDEXX diagnostic tests and technologies to make confident decisions about flock and herd health. IDEXX tests, instruments and software provide reliable results for more than 50 of the most prevalent livestock and poultry diseases. Furthermore, global distribution and manufacturing, backed by expert technical service and international regulatory expertise, ensure a prompt response wherever you do business. IDEXX is a trusted partner in veterinary diagnostics for four decades and gold sponsor of the 2023 National TB Conference.

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Defra are responsible for improving and protecting the environment. They aim to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. Defra also support our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries with the mission to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, leaving it in a better state than we found it. Defra is committed to working with industry to continue driving forward our ambitious eradication strategy and achieve officially bTB-free status in England by 2038.

National Farming Union (NFU)

The NFU represents more than 46,000 farming and growing businesses. Our purpose is to champion British agriculture and horticulture, to campaign for a stable and sustainable future for British farmers and to secure the best possible outcomes for our members. We strive to protect and promote British farm life and give our members a voice now and in the future.

Mole Valley Farmers

Mole Valley Farmers is the UK's leading agricultural supply and rural retailing business. It is owned by farmers and trades with a cooperative ethos. It is committed to UK agriculture and helping farmers lower their farm's environmental footprint, whilst improving performance and protecting margins.

Enferplex

- Irish veterinary diagnostic company, founded in 1990. With current R&D, production and diagnostic testing laboratories operating from a 25,000 ft² facility.
- The largest private veterinary testing facility in Ireland and has tested in excess of 20 million samples in veterinary diagnostics over the past 25 years, providing animal health screening service for a range of tests.
- First EU approved test developed in 1992 (Illegal Growth promoters).
- Developed the first rapid BSE test – ELISA in 1997.
- Strong R&D focus and collaborative developmental approach.
- Developed a number of ELISA and multiplex ELISA based assays for various species including: Goat, Sheep, Cattle, Camelids, Badgers, Cervids and Wild Boar.
- Our mission is to develop and use the latest technology and the best science to give accurate, cost effective and rapid results in the veterinary diagnostic field.

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XLVets

XLVets is a community of independently owned, progressive veterinary practices that work together to achieve the highest standards of veterinary care. The ethos of the XLVets community is that business ownership, and therefore all decision-making, is veterinary-led and in the hands of the people who work within their practice. We believe, by working together, we can achieve so much more.

Kingshay

Established in 1991, Kingshay are a team of agricultural specialists who provide evidence-based livestock solutions to help support farmers and their advisers. As part of the VetPartners family, Kingshay work closely with many vet practices to develop new business opportunities. Offering a wide range of services, tools and products, Kingshay help bring clarity to farming businesses.

VetPartners

Established in November 2015, VetPartners has more than 700 sites across the UK and Europe made up of some of the UK's most respected and trusted vet practices and animal healthcare companies. Led by vets, VetPartners farm division is made up of over 50 farm businesses throughout the UK and Ireland including livestock specific and mixed veterinary practices, Biobest Laboratories, Kingshay Consultancy and Exports by Vets to name a few.

VetPartners farm team are committed to building a sustainable livestock industry by driving research, implementing new technology, maximising data and supporting newly qualified farm vets. Through central practice support, farm teams can focus on delivering excellent client care. Because no two practices are the same, VetPartners encourages its practices to embrace their independent spirit, while supporting them by investing in people, facilities, equipment and latest technology so they provide outstanding care for livestock and an excellence service for clients. VetPartners aims to be a great place to work, focusing on the development and wellbeing of its people.

Farmcare Solutions Limited

TBAS is delivered by Farmcare Solutions Limited, a joint venture between VetPartners Limited, Obligace Limited, Independent Vetcare Limited (IVC) and UK Farmcare Limited. The project represents over 488 veterinary practices, 6,500 veterinary surgeons and 42 veterinary technicians in England, providing farm animal veterinary services to 60% of all cattle holdings in England. Project management and practical delivery of the service is provided by Kingshay and UK Farmcare Ltd.

Morning Session

Lord Benyon, Defra Minister of State

TB Eradication Strategy 10 years in. What have we achieved?

Lord Benyon, Minister for Biosecurity, Marine and Rural Affairs at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, will present on the first ten years of the 25-year bovine tuberculosis (bTB) eradication strategy for England. In an opening address to the TBAS conference, we will hear how this long-term strategy, which was published in 2014, has been successful in helping to turn the tide on a disease, which represents one of the most difficult animal health challenges facing the livestock sector, causing untold damage and misery to farm businesses, and individual health and wellbeing.

- For the first time in 15 years, there were fewer than 20,000 cattle slaughtered in England for bTB-related reasons over a 12-month period. We have seen the fewest bTB breakdowns over a 12-month period since 2004; and herd incidence is at its lowest since 2008.

- Charting the continued evolution of the strategy through the independent Godfray Review of 2018 and subsequent government response of 2020, the conference will hear how we must continue to do all that we can to collectively bear down on this insidious disease, which, despite the recent advances that have been made towards eradication, continues to devastate too many farming livelihoods.

- There are no easy or single solution answers; what is required is a concerted effort by all sectors involved. This means using all available tools in combination, adapted to the latest scientific advances and epidemiological techniques, to push the disease below the threshold at which it declines towards eradication. Lord Benyon will reflect on this and the progress made in the last decade and outcomes of the current five-year plan to 2025, including:

- Development of a vaccine against bTB in cattle. In 2021, world-leading field trials began, following a major breakthrough by APHA scientists with the development of a new DIVA format of the skin test to Detect Infected among Vaccinated Animals.

- Transition to wider-scale badger vaccination, to create a more resilient wildlife population and reduce our reliance on blanket culling; deployment of APHA vaccinators in several areas where badger culling operations have ended; and funding to support the farming community to deliver badger vaccination in East Sussex, alongside other initiatives aimed at making badger vaccination as accessible as possible.

- Improvements to diagnostics, surveillance and epidemiology through a quicker and more efficient PCR test; whole genome sequencing; increased frequency and sensitivity of cattle testing in the High Risk and Edge Areas since 2021.

- Measures to prevent disease through early detection and removal of infected animals; promoting lower risk purchases through use of ibTB; enhancing on-farm biosecurity through TBAS visits and CHECS; government funded local ownerships schemes enabling groups to take responsibility and accountability to tackle bovine TB.

- Formation of the Bovine TB Partnership for England in 2021, which continues to work to encourage shared ownership, co-operation and decision making on bTB. Bringing together experts from government, the farming industry, veterinarians, scientists and academics, the partnership has already helped shape policy development in areas such as future wildlife disease control and cattle vaccination.

- Whilst our strategy has brought about significant progress in the last decade, there is more work still to be done. Farmers, industry and government working together is key to turning the tide on bTB and realising our 2038 eradication goal.

Morning Session

Dr Ruth Little, DEFRA

Working collaboratively to achieve a TB free future

Dr Ruth Little is the Head of Cross-Cutting Analysis and Research for the Animal and Plant Health and Welfare Directorate in Defra. Prior to joining Defra in Oct 2022, Ruth worked as an academic at the University of Sheffield specialising in farmer decision-making and disease management. Since 2012, Ruth has worked to enhance the role of stakeholders in the development of the policies that affect them – first through the Citizen Dialogue on bovine TB that helped to inform the 25 year Strategy to Achieve Officially TB Free Status for England; moving on to work on the TB Biosecurity Action Plan that led to the formation of TBAS and latterly on the co-design of the Environmental Land Management scheme, working with Pilot Farmers. Ruth has a personal as well as professional interest in enhancing the join up between policy and practice as she grew up on a livestock farm in Cumbria – as a result, she acts as an unofficial advisor to her father on knowledge based trading and SFI and specialises in explaining the strategic direction of Defra's agricultural policy over dinner.

Bovine tuberculosis (bovine TB) is a complex disease, presenting social, epidemiological and political challenges. Defra's former Chief Scientific Advisor, Prof Sir Ian Boyd, described efforts to control bovine TB as often more of a sociological rather than epidemiological problem. Effective disease management necessitates navigating the delicate balance between disease control ideals and the wider social, political and economic practicalities that can influence efforts to achieve disease freedom.

The social dynamics of policy palatability and influence of individual disease management decisions have played a critical role in the story of bovine TB across the globe. From Michigan in the US to the UK and beyond, 'traditional' policymaking has often found it difficult to achieve holistic solutions to more complex multi-host disease problems, particularly where epidemiological complexity and uncertainty are entangled with considerations of social factors and human behaviour.

One way to address this is to change the way that policy is made, opening out the process to greater input and insight from multiple stakeholders to foster a deeper understanding of the problem and promote innovation in policy solutions. The word that is most frequently used is 'co-design' – an approach that has gained traction across Defra since Michael Gove declared in 2018 that the new post-Brexit agri-environmental policy would be 'co-designed' with stakeholders. This talk will reflect on how this approach of designing policy 'with instead of for' has developed in bovine TB policy over the past decade and how this way of working is being taken forward with the development and deployment of cattle vaccination.

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Morning Session

Professor James Wood, bTB Partnership

Co-design of future policies including cattle vaccination

Professor James Wood is a veterinary epidemiologist who works as part of a multidisciplinary research team in the University of Cambridge, studying infectious diseases. He was Head of Cambridge University Veterinary School 2013-2023. His research interest is focused on One Health approaches to infectious disease emergence and its control. He has studied control of bovine tuberculosis in both the UK, Ethiopia and India, as well as a number of other diseases. He has published 300 papers in international journals and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the Royal Society of Biology and of the Royal Statistical Society.

Disease control policies for notifiable diseases are broadly described in and constrained by primary legislation, which makes key elements hard to change. However the detail for how diseases are controlled on the ground is determined by Defra and the Chief Veterinary Officer, often through secondary legislation. Changing what is included in disease control policies requires that government consult with stakeholders and provide a careful impact assessment. Failure to consult fully can result in judicial review and stymying of proposed policy changes

Policies for the improved control of bovine TB, in order to reach TB freedom (however defined) by 2038 are increasingly being developed in a partnership approach. This, along with shared ownership of the policies, was strongly recommended in the Godfray independent review of the (England) government's TB policy (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-strategy-for-achieving-bovine-tuberculosis-free-status-for-england-2018-review), published in 2018; the response to this was published in 2020 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-strategy-for-achieving-bovine-tuberculosis-free-status-for-england-2018-review-government-response). Full control, leading to TB freedom, can only be delivered through a combined suite of control approaches and will never be reliant on one measure alone.

There has been substantial investment in the development of cattle vaccination as a supplement to cattle measures, including movement and test based controls. BCG has been tested in cattle since after WWII, but has not been widely as part of a formal control programme, although there are some interesting experiences from New Zealand. In recent years, its use has been further explored both as a supplement to other controls in the UK and as an invaluable standalone measure in countries like Ethiopia and India where test and slaughter are impossible. The effectiveness of BCG vaccination in experimental challenges is well characterised and forms much of the basis of knowledge needed for the marketing authorisation of the BCG vaccine for use in cattle. Improved understanding of how it could protect the cattle population in Britain would benefit from a fuller knowledge of its ability to reduce transmission, in addition to the protection afforded in individual cattle.

How BCG vaccine could be rolled out and used voluntarily in England has been explored in a task and finish 'Core Group' of Defra TB partnership group, which also brought in a number of highly informed stakeholders to inform consideration of a roll out. The new DIVA test developed to differentiate vaccinated from infected cattle will be needed to ensure that the test based surveillance programme can continue to run in parallel; international recognition of this test will also be important. There are large potential benefits that can come from collecting data during roll out to estimate field based efficacy of BCG in cattle to help inform and sustain the programme into the future beyond the initial phase. It is a very exciting time for bovine TB control given the opportunities that can come from these new approaches.

Panel Discussion

Ele Brown, DEFRA

Ele was appointed Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer for national, domestic and exotic diseases at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in July 2023.

Ele is an experienced veterinarian with a background in infectious disease control. She worked in a mixed practice in Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire before joining the Government Veterinary Service.

Dr Christoph Egli, IDEXX

Dr. Christoph Egli graduated in veterinary medicine in 1994 from the University of Bern, Switzerland and received his doctorate in 2001 from the University of Bern. He worked as a veterinary practitioner for four years in various Swiss veterinary practices. In 2000, he became product manager at MSD Switzerland, and joined Bommeli Diagnostics Sales Manager in 2002 where he was responsible for Europe and Latin America. In 2004, Dr. Egli became IDEXX Marketing Manager for Europe and helped establish IDEXX as the key diagnostic partner and driver of BVDV eradication programs. In 2009 he was appointed IDEXX LPD Worldwide Bovine Product Line Manager and helped develop business in China and Southeast Asia which included bovine TB control programs when IDEXX launched IDEXX M. bovis Ab Test in 2011. From 2012 he served as Sr Marketing Manager and launched diagnostic products including pregnancy tests and PCRs. In March 2020, he was appointed Associate Director LPD Marketing and worked at IDEXX headquarters in Westbrook, Maine, USA for two years. Since 2023 he serves as Associate Director LPD Global Medical Affairs. Dr. Egli has experience and special interest in global livestock disease control and eradication programs (BVDV, Johne's and TB) and cattle reproduction.

Dr Ruth Little, DEFRA

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Panel Discussion

Professor James Wood, bTB Partnership

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Bridget Taylor, BCVA

Bridget was a farm practitioner in Cheshire between 1989 and 2021. There was no bovine TB in her time in Cheshire until the early 2000s; sadly, the situation then changed dramatically. Bridget was chairperson of the XL Farmcare North Veterinary Delivery Partnership 2014-21 for the first Government tender round for TB and other statutory disease testing. She was a regular attender of Cheshire TB Eradication Group and supported initial Badger cull company licence applications in East Cheshire in 2016-17. Bridget is now a director of the British Cattle Veterinary Association, due to succeed as President shortly, and a member of the BCVA Board TB subgroup. She represents BCVA on the CHECS board and is chair of North of England Regional Advisory Board for Moredun. Recent activity has included the design and coordination of the BATVA training modules provided by BCVA in 2021, also work to help clarify rules / processes for CHECS Scheme Providers and APHA in CHECS TB Accreditation. Bridget is now a firm advocate of a holistic approach to control of bovine TB, seeking to empower farmers, private veterinary surgeons, vet led practice team members and APHA staff to work together collaboratively to prevent incursion of infections and reduce length of farm breakdowns.

Tom Bradshaw, NFU Deputy President

Tom farms in partnership with his wife, Emily, and his parents in North Essex. Alongside a small owned farm they run a larger contract farming business growing a range of combinable crops across 950 hectares in North East Essex. The home farm is based around arable production but has also diversified into equestrian and renewables. Tom has represented the NFU from Local Branch Chairman through to Chair of the National Combinable Crops Board. Tom also served as Vice President from February 2020 to February 2022.

Join in the conversation

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The NFU represents more than 46,000 farming and growing businesses. Our purpose is to champion British agriculture and horticulture, to campaign for a stable and sustainable future for British farmers and to secure the best possible outcomes for our members.

We strive to protect and promote British farm life and give our members a voice now and in the future.

The emotional and financial strain that Bovine TB continues to inflict on our members, their families and businesses is immeasurable. Since its inception the NFU has broadly supported Defra's 25-year strategy to eradicate bovine TB, with the goal of eliminating the disease while sustaining a viable cattle industry.

Following the strategy's launch in 2014, substantial advances have resulted in reducing bTB levels in England and related cattle slaughtering. Nevertheless, bovine TB continues to pose a critical threat to farming communities and represents a severe risk to animal health and welfare. We continue to advocate for a comprehensive, evidence-led policy to address this persistent challenge and safeguard progress.

The NFU's dedicated cross-sector member advisory group for bTB, led by officeholders ensure members' views are front and centre in the NFU's strategy and lobbying efforts. Independent farmer and NFU representation at the National TB Partnership Board further amplifies our messaging to drive TB Eradication.

Our dedicated TB Delivery team provides a vital resource for members, colleagues and the broader farming community in addressing the challenges posed by bTB, ensuring that the organisation can provide its members with the support they need, when they need it.

We assist livestock businesses to navigate one of the most challenging issues they face by providing:

Policy Implementation
Effective policy application and communication is critical in managing and controlling bTB. The NFU's expertise and guidance plays a significant role in ensuring that policies are applied at a farm level correctly.

Technical and Operational Expertise
The technical and operational expertise of the team is instrumental in helping members make informed decisions and take the necessary actions to address bTB in their herds.

Guidance and Advice
The NFU regularly provide Livestock farmers with guidance and advice on various aspects related to bTB, from testing and diagnosis to biosecurity measures and stakeholder engagement.

Industry Collaboration
Collaborative working with members, wider farming communities and stakeholders fosters trust and shared knowledge to build a collective effort to combat bTB.

By providing support and expertise working closely with our members, wider industry, and stakeholders, the NFU has played a significant role in establishing and ensuring the success of the strategy to manage and control bTB.

One of these successes has undoubtedly been the impact of bringing together farmers to deliver wildlife control. The NFU has brought together over 25,000 farmers and supporters to implement industry-delivered wildlife management across over 30,000km^2 in England. This successful local collaboration at an unprecedented scale has secured support for the TB Eradication Strategy.

Deputy President Tom Bradshaw:
"bTB is not a political issue, it is a disease that affects the lives of farming families and their cattle herds on a day-to-day basis. If we are to become bTB free in England by 2038, policy to combat the disease must follow the science and the science shows wildlife control is working. We will continue to work with all political parties to ensure the importance of this scientific evidence is understood."

Other collaborative initiatives the NFU have advocated include:

Empowering farmers with the knowledge to consider transitioning to **badger vaccination** where wildlife control licences are no longer a policy option. DEFRA funded badger and APHA delivered vaccination is currently taking place within several post-cull areas, as well as non-culled areas across the High-Risk Area. APHA resource is limited and now near full capacity. Landholders can fund and deliver badger vaccination on their land, providing they meet all licensing requirements. Similarly, the NFU sit upon the steering group for the VESBA project in East Sussex.

NFU are working closely with the farming community and stakeholders in Exmoor to conduct a survey of **TB in the wild deer population** in the region to establish disease prevalence and possible genomic links to outbreaks of TB in local cattle herds.

NFU work closely with stakeholders to increase farmer engagement to achieve meaningful data and informed responses from **wildlife monitoring**, for example, the recent Southern Edge Badger Survey and disease hotspots in the LRA.

Within the framework of the **GB Calf Strategy**, the NFU has fostered a partnership approach with Welsh Government, NFU Cymru, DEFRA, and APHA to expand bio-secure pathways for herds affected by TB. The bTB subgroup maintains a strong transparent working relationship to enhance licensing and operational protocols for TBIU and AFU-E's, thus increasing bio-secure outlet capacity. This collaborative effort has resulted in significant, practical, and proportionate policy adjustments that effectively manage TB risks reducing administrative burden and cost to both agency and the farmer.

Bovine TB has caused livestock farmers untold damage and misery to their businesses and wellbeing. The advances made towards eradication in the last decade demonstrates that when government and industry work together in true partnership real progress is achieved.

TBAS TB ADVISORY SERVICE | Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

The TB Advisory Service is a DEFRA funded project that offers FREE, bespoke, practical and cost-effective advice to all eligible farmers in England to help reduce the risks associated with TB.

Free Over-the-phone Advice

Free Farm Visits

Badger Sett Surveys

Personalised Recommendations

T: 01306 779410 E: info@tbas.org.uk

BCVA British Cattle Veterinary Association

The British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA) represents 1,700 veterinary professionals principally involved with livestock. Most of our members are in farm and mixed practices throughout the UK. We also represent those studying and working in industry and academia. The association values the opportunity to contribute to the Panel Discussion at this 2023 National TB Conference.

BRITISH CATTLE VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

CONSULTATIONS & POLICY

One of BCVA's responsibilities is to respond to related consultations on behalf of the profession, and in the last three years we have contributed to six different consultations on battling Bovine tuberculosis (bTB) in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

In this same period BCVA developed a comprehensive bTB Policy document, which has been shared widely across the veterinary profession and with key stakeholders, ensuring the experience and expertise of farm vets – and indeed our clients – is given a voice at the highest levels.
The farming industry and veterinary profession share a unique experience in battling bTB, working alongside one another on disease control, management, and effective prevention. The role of the private farm vet is crucial, and our policy draws on our Board members own experience and expertise, seeking to establish a balanced, evidence-based foundation on which to build.

To summarise BCVA' current position; Bovine tuberculosis is an infectious disease with risk pathways that can be reduced using greater understanding, clinical freedom for farm vets, engagement with farmers and effective herd management. BCVA are clear that to control this devastating disease an active partnership between the farmer and their PVS is essential, and this should be supported by Government policy.
The latest version of our policy was published in May 2021, and is now under review by our bTB Group. This will ensure that our position statements in the document remain relevant and evidence based. This review is underway, with an aim of an update early in 2024.

ACTION & INPUT

BCVA fully recognises that bTB control and eradication will always be one of the biggest challenges we face. However, there is much to feel optimistic about and we have many opportunities to increase our involvement, with much to gain. BCVA has previously campaigned on behalf of its members for action with regards to cattle vaccination, validating a DIVA test, the roll-out of the CHECS TB Entry Level Membership.

CHECS TB Entry Level Membership aims to empower farmers, helping them to minimise their own TB risk. This is a baseline biosecurity standard comprising achievable measures recognised by BCVA, Defra and the Welsh Government to reduce risk of a TB breakdown. CHECS sets the standards for bTB Entry Level Membership but, as with all other disease programmes, it is administered through participating cattle health schemes and licensed and quality controlled by CHECS. In this case, the BCVA BATVA programme. Launched in July 2021, this BCVA Accredited TB Veterinary Advisor course was one of the first online bTB training courses to truly qualify the veterinary team to help their farm clients mitigate against future incidents as well cope with the consequences and length of ongoing breakdowns.

The CHECS standards have recently been updated, making the programme much more accessible.

STAYING ENGAGED

The association's Board benefits from a wealth of bTB knowledge, and we will also always welcome input from outside of the Board. We can be contacted via email – office@cattlevet.co.uk. Requests for copies of our current policy can also be made to this address.

Afternoon Session

TB Control at a local level

Helen Forrester, National Farmers' Union

Brought up in Co Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, my parents had beef & sheep enterprises in my early life, before reestablishing a dairy herd as I entered my teens. It was at that point my love of dairy cows was born. In search of an adventure, I came to England to study gaining a BSc Animal Science, from the University of Nottingham. Somehow a dairy farm near Carlisle is now home, where I provide backroom support for my husband's family business.
As a passionate advocate of the agricultural industry, I've worked for the NFU in various roles for 20 years. Most recently in my role as County Adviser, I've been provided with a closer encounter than I'd ever imagined likely with bovine TB.

Brendan Griffin, Pembrokeshire TB Project

Brendan is in practice with Fenton vets in Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire. After qualifying from vet college in Dublin, he worked in Wales, New Zealand, Australia and Ireland before returning to Wales. He is deputy POV for Iechyd Da and the Veterinary Delivery Partner for South Wales, with responsibility for QA. Brendan is involved with Welsh Enferplex trial and is working with Cefn Gwlad Solutions on a badger vaccination programme in Pembrokeshire. His work with bTB has forged close links with NFU Cymru and currently is working with MV Diagnostics using their RISKRATE algorithm to identify high risk animals that are being missed by the statutory tests.

Tony Roberts, APHA

After 7 years in mixed practice, I joined MAFF in 1996 as a field vet. I developed an interest in epidemiology and joined the Field Epidemiology team as a veterinary advisor in 2014. I gained an MSc in veterinary epidemiology and public health from the RVC. Since 2017, I have been part of the APHA whole genome sequence (WGS) project for M.bovis. An offshoot of my interest in WGS is involvement with the Pilot Cluster Project in Oxfordshire after defining some of the cattle TB clusters using a WGS phylogenetic approach. I also co-lead a TB eradication group with the NFU that includes local stakeholders.

Chris Addison, Cumbrian Dairy Farmer

I farm in partnership with my wife Caroline at Kings Meaburn in the heart of Cumbria's Lyvennet Valley. The farm, Greystone House, extends to 570 acres with the majority in our ownership and the main enterprise is a 160 head Montbeliarde Organic dairy herd, with seventy followers. Milk is sold to Yew Tree. All beef calves from the dairy herd are kept on site until they are at least eighteen months old when they are then sold as either prime organic cattle to Mark & Spencer or Sainsbury through ABP or store cattle for finishing on other organic farms. We have also grown our own pedigree Simmental and Aberdeen Angus suckler herds, which produce breeding bulls and heifers. Alongside the farming operation we own and operate a small caravan park and have recently converted a disused 17th century barn into two luxury holiday homes. Over the years we have been involved in many conservation schemes, including full conversion to organic agriculture in 2007. The farm is currently in its second Higher Level Stewardship scheme which began in 2019. The focus of the current scheme is centred around a 60-acre area which has been included in a woodland pasture option alongside hedgerow restoration and planting. I am also a board member of the National TB Partnership and sit on the TBAS advisory board and have been actively involved with TB issues in Cumbria and Low risk area via the NFU and CLA.

Pembrokeshire Project

The Pembrokeshire project is a collaboration between Iechyd Da and the Ser Cymru Centre of Excellence for bovine TB at Aberystwyth University to bring research and development together with the practical veterinary work at a local level. It is a collaboration between a proactive vet and proactive farmer at a local level to tackle bovine TB. Multiple veterinary surgeons from six practices have been selected to receive enhanced bTB training. These practices have selected 15 farms to carry out enhanced biosecurity visits and work with additional measures during the two year project.

Leading the project is Brendan Griffin, Fenton Vets and Iechyd Da Bev Hopkins from Aberystwyth University will be writing publications, reports and monitoring progress along with aiding knowledge transfer. The technical board will be providing technical and scientific advise to the team. The management group will be dealing with the finances and contract meetings with Welsh Government.

Autonomy

The project gives freedom from external control or influence. By:

1. Using data analysis from existing bTB skin test results to identify high risk animals.
2. Voluntary culling of high risk animals and potential PCR testing.
3. Enhanced biosecurity on farms.

How are we going to do this?

1. Use a general risk assessment scoring tool with bTB addition.
2. Data analysis of existing bTB skin test results to identify high risk animals.
3. Analyse concurrent infections on the farm (e.g. Johne's).
4. Survey farmers and vets to improve social science knowledge surrounding bTB.
5. Discuss badger ecology and improve biosecurity from wildlife on farm.

Social science – Aberystwyth University

1. This project provides a unique opportunity to influence farmer behaviours in a positive manner around bTB control and learn from them for wider implementation and to inform policy.
2. Behaviour change science uses a systematic approach to understand the underlying mechanisms that would drive behaviour change.
3. The project will be performing a range of interventions aiming to empower both farmers and vets.
4. The integration of social and natural sciences will enable us to monitor and understand the successes and challenges of the project.

The HERDSAFE app - ID

1. Each farm will have a biosecurity visit at the beginning of the project, and will receive a weighted risk score for each biosecurity risk.
2. A total risk score will be given to each farm. A bespoke report will be produced outlining a few agreed actions to carry out, and the expected change in risk score.
3. The vet will be able to use the app to demonstrate the effect of proposed biosecurity farming practices on the weighted risk scores.
4. A new total risk improved score and star rating will then be produced.
5. The app will be used at subsequent visits to assess changes made on farm.

Data analysis – MV Diagnostics

1. The Wales Enferplex pilot needed a way to select high risk animals for additional testing. MV diagnostics created an algorithm using testing results and a risk score was generated for each animal on the holding. The analysis also gives a chronological picture over time of what happens on the farm with regards to residual disease.
2. "Risk rate" uses historical SICCT data from herds and individuals, along with more sensitive interpretation of the results to identify high risk animals. The analysis occurs over time to see when and how often individual animals are identified high risk of being infected with M. Bovis. The data is counted and a traffic light system is allocated to the individuals in the herd. Red – high risk, Amber and Green. Red animals are advised to be voluntarily culled.
3. Animals that are identified as high risk can be culled at a time convenient to the farmer – e.g. at the end of lactation, when barren, but often these high risk animals also have concurrent disease. Vets analyse the spreadsheet with the farmers.

Oxfordshire Cluster Pilot

Tony Roberts, APHA

An output from the forerunner to the current TB Partnership Group, the TBEA (TB Eradication Advisory) group was a recommendation to pilot a cluster focused approach to cattle TB control in the Edge area involving stakeholders local to each cluster. I suggested Oxfordshire as a good candidate because of the presence of multiple well-defined clusters of genetically related TB breakdowns of which I have had many years of experience working with. I proposed three clusters of differing sizes between 10 and 35km across. Two were selected according to the degree of stakeholder engagement at initial meetings: a small one centred around Thame, and a larger one in north-west Oxfordshire. Each was defined by a different phylogenetic sub-tree of Clade B6-62; this close genetic relatedness interpreted as an indicator of local spread of infection.

The Defra led project officially started in October 2022, but some activities had already occurred with steering groups established for each, consisting of local vets, farmers, stalkers, and NFU. One of the initial cluster newsletters set out the aims of the project: “For this project we want to give local farmers and vets the freedom to put forward bespoke, locally tailored approaches to controlling TB in their local area, with the ultimate goal of eradicating TB from the area altogether. The aims of the Oxfordshire Bovine TB Cluster Projects are to look at a number of locally relevant ways to add to the existing TB controls, to understand what is driving the genetically-linked clusters of disease and get on top of the problem”. A reasonably substantial fund was provided by Defra to be used by the groups for cluster related activities, although it was made clear that the project would not replace existing measures to tackle bTB but will complement them.

Several knowledge transfer events occurred during the summer of 2022 including talks about TB tests (Shelley Rhodes), badger TB and ecology and reducing cattle-badger contact (Andy Robertson), TB in wild deer (Peter Green), advances in TB Science (Phil Hogarth, Lead TB Scientist) & farm biosecurity measures (Sarah Tomlinson TBAS), but only attracted low attendance probably because the project was still in its infancy and good comms had not yet been established.

Regular steering group meetings have been held and were well supported with intense discussion of all things TB.

It took time to establish working relationships within each group but after the first few months, ideas about deer surveillance and arm walks to engage farmers outside the steering committees were translated into actions. Several events have now been held on farms to demonstrate what can be done to control TB such as practical biosecurity initiatives, how to position cameras to monitor wildlife activity effectively, and discussion about cattle and badger vaccination. A batch of game trail cameras was purchased and stored at local vet practices for use by farmers in the cluster area and have had good usage.

The role of wild deer has been a key discussion point in both cluster groups. Several training events for local stalkers have been well attended and will hopefully increase the likelihood of detection of TB in wild deer with submission of samples to APHA. Another initiative of the steering groups was for stalkers to take blood samples for sero-surveillance to provide a more accurate idea of prevalence of TB infection and potential contribution of wild deer to local cattle TB.

Working with local vets in the clusters, I have designed an epidemiology questionnaire to be completed by farmers with the aim to provide a more detailed overview of risk pathways and identify any hotspots of infection risk within the two clusters. This is currently being trialled by a few farmers.

Looking forward, some more work on individual case management is planned with local vets and APHA meeting with individual farmers, more knowledge transfer events, sett survey and badger vaccination, and use of supplementary testing where appropriate.

For me, I have seen close relationships built between the stakeholders and government with improved trust and a better understanding of how all the different parties involved view TB. I give particular credit to all who have given so much of their free time – the vets (Hook Norton, Norcal, Jon Goodson, Larkmead), farmers, NFU, local wildlife management, Thame market, APHA and Defra staff especially Eleanor Coley for her ongoing attendance and administration.

Afternoon Session

Keith Cutler, Synergy Farm Health

A collaborative approach towards managing a TB breakdown

I have been working in cattle practice in the central south and south-west of England since I qualified from the Bristol University Vet School in 1990. I am a Diplomat of the European College of Bovine Health Management and am recognised as a specialist in Cattle Health and Production by the RCVS. I have a particular interest in single-agent infectious diseases of cattle, particularly BVD, Johne's disease and TB, and am a board member of CHeCS and chair the CHeCS Technical Committee.

There are still many farmers and vets who believe that actions that can be taken to mitigate the impact of bovine TB on their herds and businesses are limited.

Bovine TB (bTB), however, despite the statutory controls applied to this disease, is just another infectious disease of cattle just like Johne's disease, BVD, and Leptospirosis. Unlike these infections, which vets and farmers manage well together, the private vet rarely gets involved in the management of bTB. However, there is a very important role the private vet can have on farm to look at bTB as an infectious disease including interpreting test results, identifying high risk animals and helping farmers put plans in place to mitigate some of the risks.

Some infection does come from outside vectors; badgers and/or bought-in or neighbouring cattle, but there are closed and relatively isolated herds with no local badger populations that suffer recurrent bTB breakdowns. The likely explanation in such cases is endemic infection; the disease is present and circulating within the herd.

Approaching disease control in a similar way to that taken to control and eradicate Johne's disease and BVD also works well with bTB. Bovine TB, like Johne's disease, is a mycobacterial disease, so it's worth taking a closer look at how the industry is taking steps to control and manage Johne's disease and perhaps applying a similar approach to tackling bTB.

Using tools such as TBAS, CHECS TB and Johne's disease-style risk management can help change mindsets and help livestock farmers and vets understand that, as with BVD and Johne's disease, they can take back control. Identifying and addressing reservoirs of infection and breaking routes of disease transmission are vital. Boundary biosecurity and quarantine are also important, as is ensuring that the herd is robust and resilient. If cattle are fit and healthy they will be better able to fend off a disease challenge.

A key message is to look at bTB skin-test results in more detail and to use and act on that information. The specificity of the skin test is nearly 100% so we can be almost certain that skin test reactors are infected with M. bovis irrespective of the findings at slaughter. The problem with the skin test is sensitivity, which is quoted as 80% (missing 20% of infected animals) at best but which, in practice, many believe to be lower. This results in undisclosed, infected animals remaining in officially TB free herds, or sold, entirely legally, continuing to spread infection within the herd or to new herds.

And what about inconclusive reactors and 'near misses' with smaller bovine reactions than avian reactions? They pass the skin test and, according to DEFRA rules, and can remain in the herd. But why have they got a bovine reaction at all? Are they infected and do they pose a threat to the health of the herd? (Data also shows that 75% of resolved inconclusive reactors (rIRs) will go on to react to the SICCT test, or test positive for bTB, within the next five years.)

This 'nuanced' approach means that cattle that have passed the skin test, can be identified as high-risk animals and managed accordingly.

The farms own vet, who understands the farm practices and the aims of the business, is best placed to give advice on how to manage these higher risk animals. Allowing the private vet access to the farms TB testing data in a useable format would make this information easier to assess and allow the vets to give appropriate risk-based advice more readily. Including the private vet when bTB cases are discussed within the APHA team responsible for managing the breakdown, would be beneficial to everyone.

ibTB Map

ibTB is a bovine TB mapping website, funded by Defra, endorsed by the Welsh Government, and produced by the Animal and Plant Health Agency Data Systems Group in collaboration with the Environmental Research Group Oxford. The site is accessible on PCs, tablets and mobile phones and has been running since 2015. To date the site has received well in excess of a million page views.

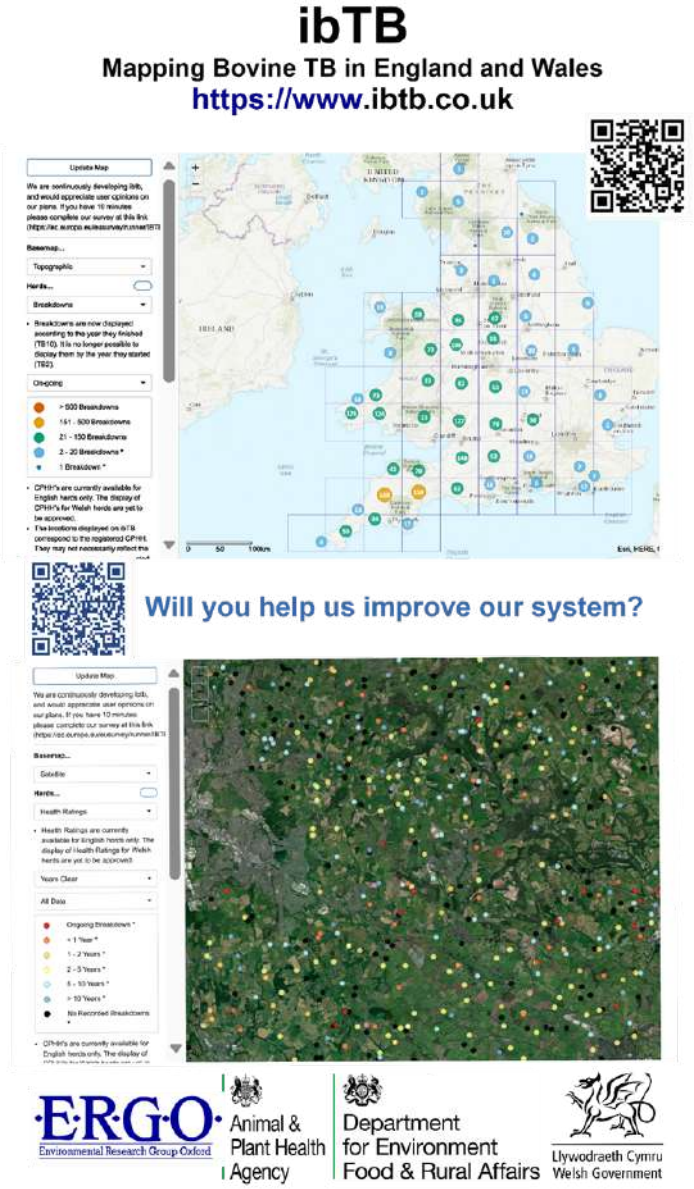
ibTB shows breakdown details of all English and Welsh cattle herds with ongoing or previous breakdowns recorded in the last 10 years. Specific herds can be located using CPHH numbers (in England), postcodes, or simple pan and zoom map searches.

The website also shows herd “Health Ratings” indicated by the number of years since the last breakdown. These are currently available for English herds only, but will also be available for Welsh herds from early 2024.

The data displayed is intended to inform cattle trading practices by making it easier for buyers to find out the TB status and history of potential trading partners’ herds. This information enables stakeholders to reduce the likelihood of acquiring TB infected animals. As a result a wide range of stakeholders (including conference hosts TBAS) strongly recommend using the system whenever possible.

Building on this success, a new three-year enhancement plan is now in the final stages of development. Likely improvements include adding detail to the reporting of breakdowns (e.g. numbers of reactors, herd size); providing details of animal trading history (e.g. numbers of animals purchased along with the TB or source herds); and perhaps most significantly, the TB history of individual animals.

These and other improvements have been extensively discussed with ibTB users – vets, advisors, and of course farmers. The ibTB team are very keen to involve users in the future of the system and get their opinions. They are at the back of the room, so please make time to go and talk to them today.



https://www.ibTB.co.uk
Mapping Bovine TB in England and Wales

ERGO
Environmental Research Group Oxford

Animal & Plant Health Agency

Join the conversation!

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Afternoon Session

FCN THE FARMING COMMUNITY NETWORK
Here for you

Dr Jude McCann
Farming Community Network

Having grown up on a family farm in mid-Ulster, Northern Ireland, Jude has significant experience within agriculture and, in particular, the farm support sector. He spent seven years as Chief Executive of Rural Support – a charity which provides support to farmers and their families in Northern Ireland, before taking up the post of CEO with the Farming Community Network (FCN) in January 2020 now working across England and Wales.

His educational experience has provided him with a global perspective of agriculture and expertise, particularly related to welfare and social issues in farming communities. This includes his PhD examining the social impacts of subsidy reforms in New Zealand and his Nuffield Farming scholarship 2017/18, in which he examined how farm support organisations can help secure farmers' resilience in a changing world. His experience in establishing and managing support programmes has increased his passion for sustainable farming communities.

Stephen Dennis ARAgS
Farming Community Network

Stephen has been farming beef and sheep in Mid Devon for over 40 years. In 1996 he joined FCN as a volunteer and alongside being a livestock agent travelling throughout the Southwest region gained extensive knowledge of the challenges farming was facing.

Following the 2001 FMD outbreak he oversaw the development of the FCN throughout the region, becoming the national lead for FCNs TB support along with the much needed support for cattle late passport appeals process working with BCMS's enforcement team (over 6500 applications have been successful since 2002).

Living in the centre of Devon means he is surrounded by the problems that TB brings to the farming community especially around the emotional and financial challenges.

Why should we care for a TB free future?

The Farming Community Network (FCN) is a voluntary organisation and charity that aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people in farming and provide support at times of difficulty and change. FCN has a large network of volunteers throughout England and Wales who understand farming and its unique pressures. Each year the charity helps approximately 6,000 people with a wide range of issues – including mental ill-health, family relationships and succession planning. FCN has been called a 'lifeline' by those they have helped. Dr Jude McCann is Chief Executive Officer of FCN. In his talk, Jude will provide an update on the charity's ongoing research into the financial, emotional and physical impacts of bTB on farmers and their families. Jude will provide some initial findings from FCN's recent UK-wide survey, which saw over 470 farmers talk about their experiences of bTB and its impacts on their farms. Further findings and recommendations will be provided next year. Stephen Dennis (FCN Southwest Regional Lead) will also provide some examples of how FCN staff and volunteers support farming families impacted by bTB.

Join the conversation!
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VESBA Vaccinating East Sussex Badgers

In terms of TB Risk Areas, East Sussex is unique. Until 2018, the southern part of the county was classed as a High Risk Area, with known endemic infection in the badger population thought to be responsible for many of the cattle herd TB breakdowns. The remainder of the county was classed as Edge Area, although TB incidence was relatively low. In January 2018, the whole county became part of the Edge Area, enabling cattle measures to be applied consistently across the whole county. With the English Channel to the south, East Sussex is surrounded on all other sides by the Low Risk Area counties of West Sussex, Surrey and Kent.

In September 2018, the TB Advisory Service held a farmer meeting in East Sussex, to explain the TB risk pathways to farmers and suggest biosecurity practices that could be implemented to reduce the risk of a TB breakdown. Many farmers in the room expressed concern that TB could never be eradicated from East Sussex, unless the issue of the endemically infected badger population was addressed. However, farmers accepted that they were unlikely to meet the criteria required to apply for a badger control licence, and therefore an alternative approach was required.

At this point, badger vaccination had only been delivered on a small scale, typically by wildlife groups and conservation charities, but to have any significant impact on TB in cattle herds, farmers and vets in East Sussex recognised that large-scale deployment would be required. Farmers also indicated that they would be willing to undertake the day-to-day activities required for badger vaccination, or would work with a member of the rural community that they knew and trusted, to undertake the tasks on their behalf. Following discussions with Defra, funding was secured to deliver a project, to determine the success factors for a large-scale, farmer-led badger vaccination project.

VESBA (Vaccinating East Sussex Badgers) is a five-year project, fully funded by Defra, which began in April 2021. The project has a target to vaccinate badgers over an area of 250km^2 in the southern part of East Sussex, and is managed by Cliffe Veterinary Group, with vaccination operations being delivered by a range of Delivery Partners from the local farming community. The VESBA project is overseen by a Steering Group that meets regularly to ensure the project remains on track to meet objectives and key performance indicators. Steering Group members include representatives from the local farming and veterinary communities, as well as Defra, Natural England and the NFU.

Prior to vaccination commencing in Year 1, the VESBA team had to undertake a range of tasks, including:

- obtaining permission from landowners to access their land
- completing sett surveying
- identifying suitable people to undertake the vaccination operations and organising training with APHA
- obtaining all the necessary equipment and consumables, including Badger BCG
- putting in place insurance to cover the activities of the Delivery Partners
- obtaining the necessary licence (badger vaccination is now covered by a Class Licence issued by Defra), including identifying Directing, Prescribing and Attending Veterinarians

Vaccination commenced in August 2021, with 77 badgers being vaccinated before the season ended on 30th November. The area covered was approximately 20km^2, giving a vaccination density of 3.9 badgers per km^2. In Year 2, vaccination got underway at the start of the season (1st May), and a total of 562 badgers were vaccinated over the full 250km^2 area. Year 3 (2023) vaccination operations are well underway, and the number of badgers vaccinated has already exceeded the Year 2 figure.

VESBA Vaccinating East Sussex Badgers

The Project Team have identified a number of issues and barriers to uptake of badger vaccination, and have worked with local farmers, Delivery Partners, Steering Group members and Defra to find ways in which these can be managed and overcome, so that lessons can be learned for future projects. One of VESBA's lay vaccinators is now able to deliver training to others, having completed the 'Train the Trainer' course, meaning that the project is 'self-sufficient' in being able to recruit more people to help with delivery, should the need arise. The VESBA team have assisted other farmers in setting up smaller-scale badger vaccination projects in South East England, with VESBA vaccinators carrying out the licensed procedures after the farmers have completed the pre-baiting phase. The project has also provided many opportunities to add value, contributing to wider discussions and knowledge sharing, and members of the VESBA project management team are frequently asked to share their experiences with other farming and veterinary groups.

A significant factor underlying the success of the project to date is the collaboration between farmers, vets and the local rural community, who are working together and taking local ownership, with a view to delivering a TB-free future for East Sussex. Whilst the farmers accept that badger vaccination will not prevent TB breakdowns arising from the purchase of risky animals, for example, by being able to take action to address a risk that they perceive to be significant, it's likely that other TB mitigation measures are more likely to be implemented.

For further information, please contact:
Nick Pile MRCVS, Project Director, Cliffe Veterinary Group
nick@cliffevets.co.uk
Dr Lindsay Heasman, Project Manager, Hurst Animal Health
lindsay@hurstanimalhealth.co.uk or 07912 799961

TB Hub

The TB hub is the ‘go-to’ place for British beef and dairy farmers to find practical advice on dealing with bovine TB on their farm, covering everything from biosecurity measures to understanding trading rules.

TBhub
The home of UK TB information

The hub is a joint industry and government initiative, supported by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA), the British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA), the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Landex, and the National Farmers Union (NFU).

www.tbhub.co.uk

RABI

RABI®
helping farming people

The charity at the heart of farming, RABI provides practical, financial and emotional support services, directly through our regionally based team and via partnerships with other specialist providers. For everyone in the farming community, there’s always expert help on hand for however long it’s needed.

RABI has been helping farming people for over 160 years and understands the challenges faced by everyone in farming. At the heart of farming, there’s always help, there’s always hope, there's always RABI.

Support Services Descriptions:

Practical:

- One-to-one, expert information, advice and guidance to meet individual needs
- Benefits guidance and other financial entitlements support (£250k - £500k benefit entitlements secured per annum)
- 24/7 freephone helpline

Financial:

- Direct financial grant support to low-income individuals or those in financial crisis (£2mn - £3mn per annum)
- Training grants to supplement the primary farm income
- Relief farmworker grants
- Targeted, emergency and quick response campaigns, such as the Return to School Campaign (£1.7mn grants issued 2022)
- Independent living grants

Emotional:

- Farmer-bespoke telephone or video conferencing, mental health counselling and self-help click & chat wellbeing support tools/resources*
- Accredited mental health training*

* Available for all qualifying farming people free of charge

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Closing Comments & Summary

Abi Reader, Welsh Dairy Farmer and NFU Cymru Deputy President

Summary & Close

Abi Reader is a third generation mixed farmer, farming in partnership with her parents and uncle in Wenvoe just outside Cardiff.
Goldsland Farm is home to 200 milking cows, 150 sheep, 90 beef cattle and 120 acres of arable. Abi is the current NFU Cymru deputy president, co-founder of Cows on Tour, an Open Farm Sunday host and a former NFU Cymru Wales Woman Farmer of the Year. Abi was part of the Wales Enferplex bTB pilot and contributed to the development of the recently announced Pembrokeshire pilot.

Summary

TBAS TB ADVISORY SERVICE | Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

On behalf of all the organisers and sponsors we would like to thank you for your support and attendance at National TB Conference 2023. We hope you have found the day both beneficial and enjoyable.

We would be very grateful if you could spare a few minutes to complete the online feedback form. Your feedback is very valuable to us and will help us with the organisation of future events.

As you leave the venue please can you kindly hand in your lanyards and name badges to a member of the team on your way out. On behalf of all the team and sponsors, thank you for attending and we wish you a safe journey home.

Please scan the QR code to complete the National TB Conference feedback form.

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Tackling Bovine TB

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Thank you for attending the National TB Conference 2023.
Have a safe journey home.