



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

14 December 2017

Dear ,

ATISN 11727 Badger Licences

Thank you for your request which was received on 17 November regarding Badger TB Eradication Licences. Please see the responses below to each of the questions raised.

1. In your previous response (attached), you told me that each farm application requires all 3 appropriate licenses for badger trapping/testing/culling Can you tell me
-How many (sets of) licenses have been issued, up to the date of your response to this request?
-How many applications for these licenses have been received (up to date of response)?

Three licence applications have been received and three licences have been issued for each application.

2. Have any licenses been issued that cover the period beginning on, or after, 30th April 2018? If so, how many? Are they all in high risk areas?

No licences have been issued for 2018.

3. Are any badger operations under license still underway either
- on the three farms you referred to in your response, or
- on any other farm?

By badger operations under licence we interpret this to mean operations under licences issued for the Bovine TB eradication programme. There are no operations currently taking place under the licences issued for the Bovine TB eradication programme.

4. In the farms where badger trap/test/cull operations under license have been taking place, and whether or not the operations are still underway, please tell me:
- How many badgers were/have been trapped and tested on each farm?
- How many badgers have tested positive?

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

TB Team
Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQJ

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre
0300 0604400

- How many have tested negative, and were all of these released?
- How many negative test badgers were microchipped before release?
- How many later proved to be positive after their blood samples were tested in the lab?
- How many were recaptured and euthanised?
- Did any trapped badgers require veterinary attention, and if so, for what?
- Who is required to keep records of all the above?

As the Welsh Government intends to publish the information requested at question 4, we have decided that the information is exempt from disclosure under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act and is therefore withheld. The reasons for applying this exemption are set out at Annex 1 to this letter.

5. The WG have stated in a response, dated 20/10/17, to an earlier FOI request, that "It is the WG's intention to publish license information on our website shortly"
 - Has this been done, and where can it be accessed?
 - If not, when will this information be published?
 - What information relating to the licenses do you intend to make public?

It is the Welsh Government's intention to publish annual licence information on the website and the details for 2017 will be published early in 2018. We plan to publish the total number of licences issued, the licencing period for each of the licences and the total area of land covered by all of the issued licences.

The Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer does not intentionally delay responding to requests for information and we have responded to yours work within the set time limits. We have been unable to provide a response sooner as we needed to ensure your request received proper consideration whilst managing existing workloads and responsibilities.

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ

or Email: FreedomOfInformationOfficer@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

Annex 1 to ATISN 11727 Badger Licences

The information requested at question 4 has been withheld.

This Annex sets out the reasons for the engagement of Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act which provides an exemption for information that is intended to be published in the future and our subsequent consideration of the Public Interest Test.

On the 20 June, in a written response by the Welsh Government to the report of the Climate Change and Rural Affairs Committee entitled Report on the Welsh Government's Refreshed TB Eradication programme, we confirmed the badger removal programme would be closely monitored and we would publish reports on both the programme delivery and any impact on the disease picture annually on our website.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) undertook the badger trap and test operations in 2017 and have been commissioned to report on the delivery of the operations. All the information requested at question 4 will be included in the report to be published.

Although no publication date has yet been set, the intention is to publish this information on the Welsh Government website in 2018.

Public Interest Test

Welsh government has considered whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption is greater than the public interest in disclosing the information.

We recognise that there is a very strong public interest in the implementation of measures to control Bovine TB and, in particular, in any actions directed towards badgers.

We believe the public interest, in line with accepted practices, is that it is sensible and fair to all concerned to withhold this information to allow for proper internal consideration prior to its public release.

We view that the wider public interest lies in favour of the requested information being released within the completed report. Disclosure of the requested information within the context of the complete report will reduce the risk of premature speculation on the policy outcomes.

In conclusion we believe that the public interest lies with the information being withheld at this time.