

## **Emailed**

12 May 2020

Dear ,

### **ATISN 13913 - Badger trap and test operations on chronic breakdown farms in Wales**

Thank you for your request which I received on 14 April about Badger trap and test operations on chronic breakdown farms in Wales. The information you requested is enclosed.

1. Explain why it is necessary to DPP test a recaptured vaccinated animal so soon after the administration of the vaccine?

As you noted in your correspondence, a study to assess the performance of the DPP as a DIVA test on badgers that had been vaccinated with BCG Sofia was being undertaken. Results at that time indicated the performance of the DPP test was not affected when used on samples from animals that have received a single dose of BCG Sofia.

Of the 38 badgers previously vaccinated and recaptured in later operations in 2018, 13 produced a positive DPP test result with four of these badgers providing a positive culture result.

The policy to vaccinate badgers only once and to DPP test all recaptured previously vaccinated badgers in 2019 was based on this information.

2. Can you please confirm that during Northern Ireland's TVR project recaptured vaccinated animals were released and not retested following recent administration of BCG vaccine?

Welsh Government do not hold this information. You are advised to direct this question to the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland.

3. What initial studies were undertaken to ensure that the DPP test can distinguish reliably between a new infection and the response to vaccination trappingside?

Please response to question 1.

4. How is the DPP VetTB test being adapted to perform as a Diva test on badgers trappingside that have been vaccinated?

We do not hold this information. APHA will respond to this.

5. Have you investigated this data set, if so what conclusions have been drawn?

Results from 2018 and 2019 disclosed a higher than expected number of DPP trap side test positives in badgers which had previously tested negative and been vaccinated. The Animal and Plant Health Agency were commissioned to analyse the results from the operations undertaken in 2018 and 2019.

The analysis noted that BCG Sofia expressed MPB83 at levels that can induce detectable antibody titres in the DPP tests, but this response declines over time. The conclusions would suggest caution in using the DPP test in badgers previously vaccinated with BCG Sofia at short intervals and also it is probably unwise to use it in badgers which have had more than one BCG Sofia vaccination.

This analysis and conclusions concur with the results from similar studies (yet unpublished) undertaken in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Based on previous information we have only vaccinated badgers once in their lifetime but now view it unsuitable to make a decision on the basis of the DPP trap side test result if the animal has been vaccinated during the previous 12 months. Animals vaccinated within the previous 12 months will be released without sampling.

6. How can you be confident that there is no cross reactivity between the BCG vaccine and the DPP test, what is the evidence that supports your conclusion?

Please see response to question 5.

7. You emphasise that an animal only receives one dose of vaccine and is not revaccinated on further capture. What are the effects of repeat vaccination, could repeat vaccination cause erroneous results in conjunction with the DPP test?

Please see response to question 5.

8. Did DPP validation include field trials of DPP as SE3281 makes no reference to having done so?

We do not hold this information. APHA will respond to this.

9. Does DPP validation include its use as a DIVA test?

We do not hold this information. APHA will respond to this.

10. Please provide a link to the validation June 2018 of the badger IGRA test.

We do not hold this information. APHA will respond to this.

11. Has the DPP validation been submitted to a scientific journal, if so what is the anticipated date of publication?

We do not hold this information. APHA will respond to this.

12. Can you please explain the underlying cause of these inconsistencies?

We do not hold this information. APHA will respond to this.

13. Please can you provide actual and forecast cost benefit analysis for both farmer and taxpayer relating to the trap and test aspect of the Btb eradication programme on chronic farms in Wales?

We do not hold this information. A full analysis including cost will be carried out following 4 years of completed interventions.

14. Please can you provide a projected value for money analysis for the trap and test aspect of the Btb eradication programme on chronic farms in Wales?

Answer as above.

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: [Freedomofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedomofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

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Wycliffe House,  
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Wilmslow,  
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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