

## **BVZS Position summary on the necessity of wildlife interventions for the control of bovine tuberculosis (*M. bovis* infection) in cattle in the United Kingdom**

1. *BVZS believes that there is a need to control Mycobacterium bovis tuberculosis (bTB) in cattle and other domestic species in the UK for economical and animal welfare reasons.*
2. *BVZS considers that wildlife is involved in the epidemiology of bTB and that this should be considered as part of control measures for the disease in areas when bTB is prevalent in both cattle and wildlife.*
3. *BVZS considers that badgers are currently the only important wildlife species of concern in the epidemiology of bTB in the UK and Ireland. Other species, in particular deer and wild boar, must however be continually monitored.*
4. *BVZS believes that it is necessary to consider the disease in badgers, as part of the cattle disease management strategy in the UK, where the disease is shown to be prevalent in both cattle and badgers in a given area.*
5. *BVZS believes that:*
  - *control of bTB in cattle must continue to focus on cattle testing and movement controls, as well as improved and enforced on-farm biosecurity, to reduce disease transmission between cattle and badgers (in both directions);*
  - *all methods of badger control should follow the Principles for ethical control of wildlife (Dubois et al., 2017);*
  - *badger culling should therefore only be considered where human activities have been modified (i.e. where biosecurity has been put in place), where there is confirmation of persistent bTB prevalence in the local badger population (e.g. via RTA survey) and all other control methods have already been carried out;*
  - *all culling must be humane, adhere to the welfare and biosecurity guidance set by Natural England (or devolved authorities) and demonstrate an evidence-based significant and sustained (year on year) impact on bTB reduction in cattle;*

### *BVZS supports:*

- *the development of an appropriate BCG vaccination for cattle,*
- *the development of an oral badger BCG vaccination,*
- *improved in-vivo tests for both badgers and cattle, and*
- *a field trial of immune-contraception for population control of badgers*
- *sustained investment in transparent, publicly-available, peer-reviewed, independent scientific research into badger bTB and its control*

Supporting evidence for this statement is available in the *BVZS position statement on the necessity of wildlife interventions for the control of bovine tuberculosis (M. bovis infection) in cattle in the United Kingdom.*