



# Badger control key to beating bTB



## Action still needed

I FEEL compelled to write to ensure your readers do not accept letters in your publication to be statements of fact, following a second letter from Martin Hancox (*FG, June 5*) which makes spurious and completely unsubstantiated claims about the history of TB in the UK, particularly in relation to badgers.

To correct his many errors would require a letter of some length but, to give your readers an idea, this graph (*see below*), taken from Prof John Krebs' report to Government in 1997, shows the actual prevalence in the many thousands of badgers analysed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) during removal operations at the time.

As you can see, not only were many hundreds of badgers examined every year, but the



Badger TB infection rates are still rising, says Den Leonard.

prevalence was both high and rising throughout the period. Mr Hancox's claim infection in

badgers was discovered in 'just a few badgers in a clan or two' will give you an idea of his intention to

mislead the public and your readers.

Even today, whenever badgers are examined for TB in the high risk areas, a high prevalence of infection is found.

In the study into badger vaccination (*Carter et al, 2012*) the prevalence (using their triple test) was 53 per cent positive within their sample of 294 badgers tested at the start of the vaccine programme in 2006.

In Cheshire, where once only one road-killed badger out of about 400 in the early 1990s was found to be positive for TB on post-mortem, a recent study at Liverpool University found the number had risen to more than 20 positive in 102 badgers examined.

**Den Leonard,  
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Shropshire.**

IT is scientifically proven badgers contribute up to 50 per cent of bTB cases where this disease is endemic, as shown yet again – in research by Donnelly and Nouvellet in 2013.

Where badgers were removed in high incidence areas, such as Thornbury, Steeple Leaze and Hartland Point in England and East Ofulay in Ireland, disease rates fell by 80 per cent for 10 years.

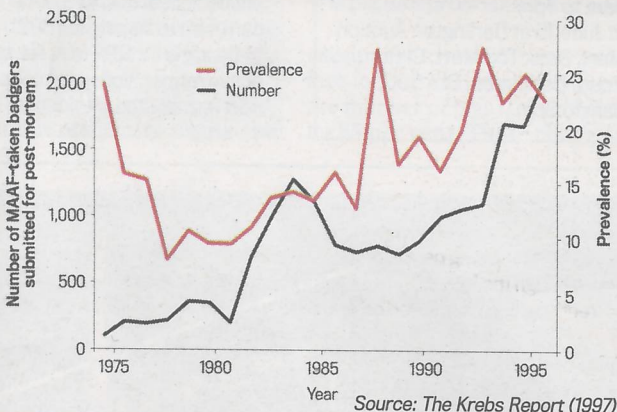
Former Government Chief Scientific Officer Sir David King stated: "Removal of badgers should take place as well as alongside controls on cattle."

We all want healthy badgers and cattle. To stop this disease, action must be taken in hotspots.

What we need now is to repeat this in other areas where bTB is rampant as soon as possible.

**Tanya Robbins,  
via email.**

### Prevalence of TB in MAFF-tested badgers



## Mistakes have been made, but cull policy is vital

BY totally defying logic, common sense and all the evidence, Martin Hancox (*FG, June 5*) has forfeited his credibility via his flawed attempt to exonerate bTB infected badgers in transmitting the disease.

Like others, he has insulted the intelligence and integrity of farmers and everybody on the front line.

There are lies, damn lies, statistics and the Badger Trust's misinformation in its cynically-orchestrated propaganda campaign.

Examining bTB DNA from infected cattle would confirm

infected badgers were responsible for at least 90 per cent of the breakdowns. Infected badgers are the reservoirs of infection for all mammals.

I do, however, happen to agree Natural England's current policy of taking random 'potshots' at free-roaming badgers has not been efficient, becoming an excessively costly public relations disaster.

The policy should never have been initially rubber-stamped by the NFU or the British Veterinary Association.

There must, however, be a

targeted cull of bTB infected badgers. Technology has been developed to identify infected setts and the dormant badgers can then be fatally anaesthetised using carbon dioxide from dry ice.

The opponents to any cull on principle would have no justification whatever to object.

Having a healthy badger population will result in healthy cattle.

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