

## **INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC GROUP ON CATTLE TB (1998-2007)**

**Former Chairman:** Professor John Bourne CBE MRCVS

**Former Members:** Professor Christl Donnelly; Professor Sir David Cox; Professor George Gettinby; Professor Ivan Morrison; Professor John McInerney; Professor Rosie Woodroffe

Rt Hon Michael Jack MP (Chairman)  
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee  
Committee Office  
7, Millbank  
London SW1P 3JA

21 November 2007

Dear Mr Jack,

### **BADGERS AND CATTLE TB Response to “Tuberculosis in Cattle and Badgers: a report by the Chief Scientific Adviser”**

I am pleased to let your Committee have our considered scientific response to Sir David King's report, in which he advocates culling badgers as a method of controlling cattle TB nationally. In our response we summarise some of the counter-arguments developed in detail in ISG scientific publications. Sir David has underestimated the powerful arguments showing substantial negative effects on TB incidence in cattle involved in such culling, as well as the formidable logistical difficulties which make such detrimental effects a more likely outcome than the intended benefits.

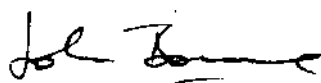
We believe the report's authors misunderstand a number of scientific issues and, equally seriously, fail to take into account the full range of data on which the ISG conclusions and recommendations to Ministers were based.

An immediate objective of a cattle TB control policy must be to reduce the national disease incidence. We note that Sir David has not commented on the various constructive suggestions made in the ISG report – particularly those relating to cattle-based controls – that we believe would address this objective. The misunderstanding of our mathematical modelling work is particularly unfortunate, and likely to have led him to underestimate the likely benefits of improved cattle based control measures.

Furthermore, to have any positive impact on this control policy objective, badger culling would need to cover much of southwest of Britain and would have to be conducted in a systematic, coordinated way, and sustained for many years. Geographically restricted culling, even over a number of selected areas of a hundred square kilometers or more, could be expected to have, at best, only minimal impact nationally, and would be likely to make matters worse if its implementation were uncoordinated, unsustainable or patchy.

We shall be commenting separately on the specific points highlighted in your communication to Professor Donnelly of 8th November.

Yours sincerely,



**F J BOURNE**