

**Bovine Tuberculosis Strategy
Regional Consultation Meetings
(England)
March/April 2004**

**A report to Defra from Keystone
Marketing & Event Management Ltd**

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1. Introduction:

Developing a new strategy for tackling Bovine TB is a major challenge for Government, the farming industry, the veterinary profession and other interested organisations, including those representing wildlife interests. Bovine TB is increasing by around 18% per annum and the cost to Government, including research, is forecast to cost £71 million in 2003/4. Margaret Beckett, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, announced in February 2003 that there would be a review of current strategy. A consultation document was produced in February 2004. The consultation period ended on June 4th 2004.

As part of the consultation process, seven one-day workshops were held around the country. The aim of these events was to bring together a representative group of individuals, who together represented the different interest groups in each locality, in order to better inform the strategy. They also presented a good opportunity for government representatives to hear first hand the views of stakeholders in different regions of England. In particular, Defra wanted to:

1. Inform stakeholders of the purpose of the consultation
2. Gather views from stakeholders on what should be incorporated into a 10 year TB strategy
3. Look at how to help stakeholders better understand the views of other stakeholders and create an opportunity for people to talk across sectors
4. Clarify with stakeholders the purpose of the short term measures proposed in part two of the consultation document and seek to agree how they should be implemented
5. In low incidence areas, to establish the level of awareness of the risks and look at ways that this could be increased.

The tone of the events was informal, friendly and interactive, but at the same time business like. It was made clear from the outset that these events were funded by Defra, but independently organised and facilitated by Keystone, a conference and event management company, and that all views were valid and would be listened to. The events were chaired by a professional facilitator, Nigel Grinstead. Nigel has wide experience of both facilitation and mediation, mostly within the health service. Defra staff at the events gave three short PowerPoint presentations during the day to set the context and provide the necessary background information. At other times, and particularly during the discussions, they were treated by Nigel as just another category of stakeholder. This approach led to much more constructive discussions.

2. Locations:

2.1 Harper Adams Agricultural College (Shropshire), 26th March

This event focused on Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, although it also took in surrounding counties, from Cheshire in the North to Oxfordshire in the East. This area has seen a very rapid increase in TB incidence over the past 10 years and there are concerns about recent TB incidents disclosed in Cheshire and Leicestershire. Farms in NE and SW Shropshire (Market Drayton and Corvedale hotspots), the Staffs -Derbyshire border and West Worcestershire are on 1 or 2 year testing regimes with many farmers under movement restrictions. The Stafford -Derbyshire hotspot and the sporadic cases in Cheshire are almost entirely associated with *M. bovis* spoligotype 25, a strain seldom found elsewhere in GB. The disease is probably endemic in the badger population in those areas. Parts of Stafford and Derbyshire are involved in the RBCT. Also in this area, the RTA badger survey spans the counties of Shropshire, Hereford and Worcestershire.

2.2 Epsom Downs Racecourse, 30th March 2004

The intention was that this meeting should cover the whole of the South East, but in practice there was very little interest from anyone outside the small, localised hotspot in the South Downs area of East Sussex. There have been a few breakdowns in adjacent counties, but these have all been traced to cattle brought into the area from other hotspots and are, therefore, more easily contained. The strain (spoligotype) of the TB bacterium responsible for the majority of the East Sussex incidents is endemic to this area and has also been found in the local badger populations. A total of 18 parishes within this area are on annual testing, with several farms under restrictions. Additionally, there is a buffer of biennial testing parishes around this hotspot.

2.3 Moorland Links Hotel, Yelverton, Plymouth, 15th April 2004 Redwood Lodge Hotel, Bristol, 16th April 2004

The first event covered Devon and Cornwall and the second, Somerset and Gloucestershire. Throughout these 4 counties, TB has been endemic in both badger and cattle populations for many years. TB was never totally eradicated from Gloucestershire and Cornwall when the rest of the country had achieved accredited free status in the early 1960s. The first tuberculous badger ever discovered in GB was found on a Gloucestershire farm in 1971. There has been a significant increase in TB incidence in these counties in the past 10 years and a dramatic surge post FMD. Gloucestershire has the highest herd incidence of TB in GB (over 10% of herds in the county sustain a confirmed TB breakdown every year). Badger populations in the area have also increased significantly since 1992 and there is a very strong feeling among local farmers that the two are connected although there are a number of other possible contributing factors. This area, with the exception of Cornwall, was also badly hit by FMD. Almost all parishes are on a one or two year testing regimes with very many farms under restrictions. For this reason, consideration of pre -movement testing was for most farmers present, academic.

2.4 Newmarket Racecourse, 27th April 2004

This event was intended to gauge control among stakeholders in an area with very low incidence of TB. The few outbreaks that do occur can be traced back to cattle bought in from hotspots, usually the South West. There is concern among farmers about imported TB as they rely on markets in these hotspots. However it is, understandably, much less of an issue and it was quite difficult to persuade farmers to attend. As a result the make up of the meeting was very different to other parts of the country (see below) which allowed for some different views and discussions. The whole area is on 4 yearly testing, planned as far as possible to ensure some farms in each parish are tested each year for surveillance purposes.

2.5 Thirsk Racecourse, 28th April 2004

The North East (Yorkshire and Northumberland) has historically been relatively TB free. However, there has been a significant increase in incidence with restocking post FMD. Almost exclusively these can be traced to cattle imported from hotspot areas of the UK (usually the South West) or from Ireland. Historically Ireland is an important source of fattening stock for this area. Cattle from Ireland have to be post and pre-movement tested. There is no evidence to date of a wildlife reservoir. The whole area is on a 4-year testing cycle, with exception of herds with regular intake of animals from 1 or 2 yearly testing parishes or imported from Ireland. As in East Anglia, tests are planned so that each location will have at least some testing every year to maximise surveillance. There is still some overdue testing, but this is largely due to farmers who are refusing to comply or who do not have adequate stock handling facilities.

2.6 Crooklands Hotel, Kendal, 29th April 2004

Like the North East, there was very little TB in Lancashire or Cumbria prior to FMD. The incidence in Cumbria has increased since then. This has been largely due to post-FMD restocking, with breakdowns that can be traced to animals purchased from high TB incidence areas of GB, and have so far been contained. There is no evidence that there is a wildlife reservoir and as yet, no contiguous spread from farm to farm. However, TB testing of a farmed deer herd restocked after FMD has turned up a series of incidents in the Furness Peninsula. These are largely associated with a spoligotype that is most prevalent in Shropshire and Herefordshire, but had also been isolated in this part of Cumbria in the early 1990s. Breakdowns in the Furness Peninsula cannot be traced to imports of infected animals and there is evidence of contiguous spread which would suggest there is a wildlife reservoir. To date no infected wildlife has been found but an *ad hoc* RTA badger survey initiated last December is under way in this area. Most of this area is still on a 4 year testing regime with the exception of those farmers who restocked their holdings after FMD or where there have been breakdowns.

2.7 City Inn, Westminster, 12 May 2004

In addition to the seven regional events Defra organised a separate half-day meeting in Westminster. This workshop was primarily for those organisations who are not represented at a regional level and the national representatives of the larger stakeholder groups to hear a report back from Defra on the outcomes of the regional meetings in England, and also to seek views on the issues raised at regional level, in particular, on how Government and stakeholders can work together to develop and subsequently deliver a new long term strategy. Delegates starting thinking about building upon, and developing, Governance arrangements in relation to TB. No conclusions were reached but clearly this is an areas that would merit further discussion.

3. Attendees

Initial invitation lists were drawn up by the local Divisional Veterinary Managers with help from their regional Government Offices. Their brief was to include a mix of farmers, vets from private practice and other stakeholders. In each instance all the county badger groups for that area were included as were wildlife trusts and RSPCA. In each area, the invitees included auctioneers, valuers, trading standards officers and others from local authorities, agricultural and veterinary colleges. Farmers were largely those with dairy or beef herds, although the Deer Farmers' Association were represented at a number of events. Farmers made up some 60% of invitees and, with the exception of Newmarket, (see 2.4 above) they made up 40% of delegates.

- 350 in total at the 7 events
- 40% farmers
- 5% vets from private practice
- 6.5% badger groups
- 3.5% other wildlife/environmental interest
- 7% local authority
- 3% auctioneers/valuers/abattoirs
- 18% Defra / SVS
- 18% 'other stakeholders'

A fuller breakdown of delegates can be seen in Appendix 1

4. Design of the Day

4.1 Layout:

Delegates were divided among tables with 8/9 to a table. These were mixed according to interest so that each table had a mix of farmers, vets and other stakeholders. Where possible, each table had a badger or other wildlife interest represented. The Defra contingent was split up among the tables and were treated as stakeholders – apart from when they were giving a presentation and/or acting as facilitators.

4.2 Chair/Facilitators

Nigel Grinstead, an independent facilitator, chaired the events and was also responsible for briefing the table facilitators. These were members of staff from Defra's Page Street Office or from the Divisional Veterinary Offices. Each table had at least one person from Defra to act as a table facilitator and their brief was to prompt and lead the discussion in the morning and afternoon workshops to ensure these moved on and that all the areas were covered. Facilitators were briefed to challenge opinions where appropriate, but NOT lead or dominate discussions.

4.3 Programme

9.30 Registration

10.00 Welcomes

 Preparing for a New TB Strategy

- the national context (Page Street Defra)

- regional context (Divisional Veterinary Manager
or Veterinary Officer)

(followed by questions of clarification, which will run in to a short discussion to get people warmed up)

11.10 Coffee

11.25 Towards a 10 Year Strategy

- a vision for the future

Nigel encouraged delegates as groups round each table to think themselves 10 years into the future and consider;

A. What does 2014 look like – ie set a realistic target for TB incidence.

B. How did you get there, in particular

- cattle measures – surveillance, control, movements, husbandry
- research developments – vaccines, diagnostic tests, role of wildlife/interventions
- management of wildlife reservoirs

C. What barriers did you have to overcome.

1.00	Lunch
1.45	10 Year Strategy – discussion
2.15	Preparing for a New TB Strategy - the Short Term Measures Defra Veterinary Adviser
2.30	Pre and Post Movement Testing Workshop

During this session, delegates were asked to consider:

- How can the proposal for pre -movement testing be put into practice?
- Why don't we do this already?
- What are the barriers to making it work
- What do we need to make it work? (mechanics or incentives)

Should conclude with the tables preferred option and reasons – these were recorded on flip charts

3.30	Feedback from Pre & Post Movement Testing
3.50	TB Strategy Consultation Process - the next steps

4.3.1 Presentations

There were just three short presentations throughout the day. One to set the national context; one to put this into a regional perspective and the final one, in the afternoon, to explain the thinking behind the proposed short term measures. Presentation one and two was the same for all the meetings and the PowerPoint slides from these are included in Appendix 2.

5. Outcomes

Outcomes were recorded by:

- a. scribes from each table recording their main conclusions on flip charts
- b. Keystone/Defra taking notes from the post workshop discussions.

Inevitably there was considerable repetition, both from event to event, but also from table to table at the same event. We have endeavored to cover the main points and recurring themes here. A full set of notes and the recordings from flip charts have been submitted to Defra and are available on request (tb.strategy@defra.gsi.gov.uk).

5.1 Ten Year Strategy

5.1.1 'Where do you want to be in 2014?'

There was a clear divide between those who felt that total eradication should be the objective and those who wanted to set more realistic targets. Those who set targets varied between 'where it was 10 years ago', to those who wanted to see it back to the levels of the 1970s/80s (or in some cases 1950s).

Points of note:

- Whatever the target, action must start in 2004, not 2013, with well-defined interim targets and a 'road map'.
- Those in areas with relatively new and lower incidence (NE, Cumbria, SE) were more inclined to go for eradication.
- In Newmarket where there is virtually no TB, the target was not isolationist... their target was to remain TB free but work towards reducing the incidence elsewhere in the country
- In areas with a high incidence of TB, some tables did still want to aim for 'total eradication'. In these cases, there was an understanding that this was probably unrealistic, but that it should be the aim. 'Tiger Woods doesn't approach the first hole aiming to come second'!
- Those tables that set targets on the other hand felt it was important to aim for something realistic to avoid setting themselves up for inevitable failure
- On three occasions someone in the room raised the idea of letting TB run in cattle. It is no longer a real threat to human health, so why not treat it as just another animal health issue. This was unanimously and vociferously rejected by both farmers and badger groups. With farmers the main concern was public confidence in the food chain. There were real fears of a return to a BSE type scenario with consumers refusing to touch British beef or dairy products

5.1.2 How did you get there/ What were the barriers.

The following are the main repeating themes that emerged from both the discussions and the notes on flipcharts:

PR and Dissemination of Knowledge

The need for better exchange of information came up again and again. There was felt to be a need for a better knowledge exchange:

- a. **To the public/consumer.** Farmers know from bitter experience how important this is. They are aware that in order to win support for badger culling, the public must understand the issues. However, there was real concern that in explaining the issues, the consumer might misunderstand the risk of the disease and this could lead to a lack of confidence in British beef or dairy products. Also a public misunderstanding (sometimes reflected amongst delegates) of the difference between (and relative risks from) bovine TB and human TB.
- b. **To the farmer.** Almost unanimously, delegates said that they had learnt a huge amount from the meetings. They want to know more and want information to be spread to other farmers. This was particularly true of those areas where there was a low level of TB... farmers felt it was essential that the risk from TB was conveyed to other farmers. In the NE it was agreed that this should be as much an industry responsibility (via press and NFU) as a Defra issue 'farmers get too much correspondence already from Defra and they don't read it'. They wanted the results from research to be more widely available – and sooner.

Research

There was a feeling of frustration at all the events that we still appear to know so little about the disease. Over the course of the meetings, delegates began to realise (if they didn't know already) that this is a very complicated disease. However, it was a surprise to most to realise that even the 'experts' in the room had large gaps in their knowledge. At every event there was a call for more and better research... but that this should not delay or be a substitute for immediate action. 'More focused research' was a repeated theme.

Farmers, particularly in the South West and Shropshire, expressed a dissatisfaction and frustration over the Krebs trials. It was felt that it was taking too long – 'we can't wait for two years for the results' and that it would not come up with any conclusive results. Badger groups, on the other hand were more likely to support Krebs and to insist that any strategy on widespread culling must be as a result of solid research findings.

In particular it was felt that a better test was essential in control of the disease. In the NE, farmers expressed surprise that farmers were given the option of taking part in trials of the new test and suggested that in trial areas it should be compulsory to ensure better take up.

At all the events, there was a demand for an effective vaccine. In some quarters, there was an appreciation that this might never happen, and that there might be other issues around adopting a vaccination policy (eg public confidence).

However, there appeared to be quite a widespread view that a vaccine would be developed and that it was just a matter of time and that this could then be administered effectively to both cattle and badger populations. 'any other measures are just filling in time until we get a vaccination'. This is another area that may need better dissemination of information to manage expectation.

Lessons to be learnt from abroad/the past

A recurring theme was the need to learn from the past and from other countries that have succeeded in eradicating (or reducing TB). Countries that were repeatedly cited were New Zealand and Ireland. There was also a feeling of frustration that the UK appeared to have almost eradicated TB in the 50s and 60s when it was more of a human health issue. A repeated request was to look at what was done then and repeat it now.

Badger Groups

It is worth making special comment on the representation from the county badger groups. They appeared to have been very well briefed and prepared for the meetings by the NFBG. They tended to take a very conciliatory approach and, as a result added hugely to the debates and the events will have helped to improve their image amongst other stakeholders. In several cases (possibly not entirely unplanned) they elected to be scribes on their table. However, while appearing to be open to all ideas, they took the line that any widespread badger culling must be supported by solid scientific evidence (something that might be quite difficult to achieve).

There was genuine surprise expressed by some farmers that these representatives from badger groups were actually very reasonable people. For some it appeared to be the first time they had appreciated that the badger groups have the same over-riding objective – to reduce the incidence of TB. In several instances, members of the badger groups and farmers exchanged contact details and talked about keeping in touch.

Wildlife Reservoirs

As you would expect, this was a major issue in the areas where TB is endemic in the badger population, ie Gloucestershire/Somerset, Devon/Cornwall and Shropshire and less so in the areas where no TB has been found in wildlife. In these areas farmers have an unshakeable belief that badgers are the cause of TB. This clouds their thinking on other aspects of the TB strategy. They feel that without wildlife control other measures will not be effective. A repeating theme from all three of the hotspot areas was that co-operation with Defra – including contributing financially to control measures should be conditional on the control of wildlife. Farmers talked of a feeling of helplessness: 'I feel my hands and feet are tied; there is lots of testing, but no badger control.' 'People on the ground know badger culling would work, but our hands are tied' There was a feeling of frustration with Krebs and an insistence that something had to be done now – not in 2 years time. A number of farmers expressed their frustration that it appeared

to be acceptable to slaughter cattle to control TB, but not badgers. 'What I want to see is the second half of the circle treated like cattle are.'

All the representatives from Badger groups in these areas said they were not necessarily against culling (see above). They agreed that they wanted to see a badger population that was clear of TB as much as farmers wanted to see clear herds and if it took badger culling to achieve this they would consider it 'provided it is backed up by scientific research'.

Biosecurity / Livestock Management

There seemed to be more acceptance of the need for stricter bio -security in the areas where TB was less prevalent. This could be due to the frustration over wildlife reservoirs in the TB hotspots (see above). Elsewhere there was agreement among farmers that biosecurity was important, but they were concerned more with testing and isolation issues rather than trying to keep badgers away from cattle. There was also agreement that some farmers were better and more diligent than others. Farmers in the north took a stronger line on policing other farmers. There was a suggestion that some of Defra's guidelines should be compulsory rather than recommendations. In particular, they felt that farmers who were not complying with testing needed to be brought into line and that pressure should be brought to bear on them by both Defra and other farmers. The issue of hobby farmers was raised in Newmarket and Thirsk and it was agreed that these livestock owners should have to comply with TB testing in the same way as commercial herds.

The frustration over bio -security in the SW was shared by some vets. One said that when asked by farmers for advice on biosecurity he felt there was nothing he could advise 'A badger-free food trough is a cattle-free food trough'

Large animal vets and lay testing

There was almost unanimous resistance to lay -testing from farmers and vets. For vets in the high incidence areas of the south west and Shropshire, TB testing is a major source of income and allows them to keep their practices at a viable size. A repeated theme from vets in these areas was that the annual test is the only time they get to see the whole herd and that it is an obvious time for them to advise on biosecurity. Also, if they were to introduce lay testers, they would not be able to support sufficient vets to give the current levels of emergency support to farmers (ie for calvings, milk fevers etc). For the farmers, they admitted to taking advantage of the vet's visit to get him to look at the whole herd, and 'do the odd job' without having to pay an additional call out fee.

For vets in the low incidence area, the issue was about supporting a lay tester. Four yearly tests in an area with relatively few cattle numbers would not justify a full time tester and it is not a job that they could see sitting easily alongside other responsibilities for their existing staff (ie receptionists, small animal nurses etc).

CAP Reforms

This was a recurring theme. Farmers are aware that they will be worse off under the new EU reforms of the CAP. This was a common defence used to argue against farmers contributing to the cost of TB controls. 'We wouldn't want to see effective control as a result of disappearance of the UK cattle herd' i.e. because farmers had gone out of business.

Local Management / Local Forums

This came up in several areas. There was a request for more 'bottom -up' management of the problem and less 'top down'. There was general enthusiasm generated from the events and delegates were both surprised and pleased at the level of consensus among different stakeholders. It was felt that this might be the beginning of local forums which could drive a new national policy forward. Several delegates said they would be happy to be part of such a group. In the North East of England (Yorkshire Divisional Office), Kate Sharp (SVS Divisional Veterinary Manager) went one further and suggested that they might pilot such a group. Kate has already run similar local forums in relation to the AHWS and she felt that this would be a natural progression.

Elsewhere there was a plea for local knowledge and experience to be taken into account (i.e. vets in practice, DVMs, VOs and farmers)

Political Will

Farmers in particular, but veterinary practices as well, were united in believing that there was not the political appetite for badger culling or the political will to spend more money or effort on eradicating TB. By this they meant central government. There was praise for the local DVM/SVS staff, but repeatedly farmers would say that they felt these local staff 'had their hands tied' and were just obeying orders from above with no real authority.

Miscellaneous Additional Points

- East Sussex would like to be a pilot for any future research or vaccine trial.
- Department of Health should contribute as this is a human health issue
- Can information about parishes be made available via DVMs to farmers wishing to restock from clean areas
- Defra needs a charismatic 'TB Tsar' to drive the strategy forward and lead the PR effort
- Deer farmers should be treated like cattle farmers – i.e. with routine testing and a slaughter policy for infected animals
- Several suggestions were made to better utilise BCMS in TB control and/or issue passports

5.2 Short term Measures

This was effectively a discussion of 6 different options proposed by Defra for pre and/or post movement testing of stock. The options were:

- Zoning
- **Pre**-movement test all cattle moving out of 1&2 year testing herds
- **Post**-movement test for cattle moving out of 1&2 year testing herds into 3&4 year herds
- A combination of the second and third options
- **Pre- and post**- movement testing for **all** cattle
- **Pre**-movement test based on herd TB history

Defra's preferred option is the second one, ie pre -movement testing of all cattle from 1 and 2 year testing herds to any other herd.

As with the 10 Year Strategy, some clear themes emerged from the discussions and the flip charts.

5.2.1 Preferred Option

There were clear differences in the preferred option depending which part of the country we were in and the different issues faced by stakeholders in these areas. In the areas where there is almost exclusive annual testing (SW), the majority of farmers in the room were under movement restrictions and on a 60 day testing regime. Pre-movement testing was not an issue to them. However, these areas came out in favour of Defra's preferred option. As did the areas with one or two year testing, although here the issue was about flexibility of the test so that it could be combined with their annual tests (see below). For the areas with low incidence of TB, there was interest in post movement testing **alongside** pre-movement testing and more concern about isolation measures. In Thirsk and Newmarket, there was enthusiasm for pre and post-movement testing and in Cumbria, there was a call for annual testing for the whole country. In Thirsk and Cumbria there was also an element who favoured zoning, with a line drawn across the country at around the M62! However, there was also concern from these same farmers about the possibility of Scotland introducing their own zoning policy.

Elsewhere zoning was ruled out as being unworkable and divisive. There was also a concern that it would dent public confidence.

Flexibility and Isolation

There was a conflict of interest between the areas of high incidence where annual testing was the norm and low incidence areas. In the annual testing areas, farmers were happy to opt for the pre -movement testing, but were very keen that this should co-incide with their annual test which would avoid a second

test in the same year, particularly if they were being asked to pay. This would require a certain amount of flexibility and the request was for a 3 month 'window' during which testing could take place and their pre-movement certificate remain valid.

However, in contrast, farmers in clean areas who wished to import from one or two yearly testing herds, wanted to see isolation after pre-movement testing and a minimal time from test to movement. These areas also advocated post-movement testing with isolation of cattle until after test results were known.

Stigma

This was a recurring theme, not only in the high frequency areas. Farmers were concerned that compulsory pre-movement testing would mark the farm and the stock as 'high risk'. This was one of the reasons cited by Cumbria to support their call for annual testing and pre and post movement testing for all herds.

Who Pays?

There was resistance to the suggestion that farmers should pay for the short term measures. However, it was not rejected out of hand. The main issue from those areas which are most likely to be asked to pay for pre-movement testing (ie one and two year testing parishes) was that payment should be linked to giving the farmers more control. There was general agreement that farmers would trade wildlife control for agreeing to pay for the pre-movement tests.

In the NE, farmers suggested without any prompting that they should contribute to the cost of post-movement testing.

It was also suggested that there might be a premium paid for pre-movement tested stock which would cover the cost. There was also, a suggestion that revenue might be generated by penalising those who did not comply.

Pre-movement testing – miscellaneous recurring points

- There was some confusion as to which animals would qualify for pre-movement testing, in particular movements within SOAs and movement of young calves
- The possibility of welfare issues should a farm fail a pre-movement test was raised. The farmer might not have the capacity or resource to keep that stock on
- If cattle were being sold off a farm because of retirement or after the death of a farmer there could be considerable hardship and difficulty to either the retiring farmer or the farmer's partner/family in the event of a failed pre-movement test
- Pre-movement testing would cause a seasonal bulge with everyone requiring testing at once
- Pre-movement testing would create logistical problems for sales of pedigree herds as sales catalogues etc take some time to prepare
- The BCMS should be used to record clear tests

- Pre and post movement testing would only be really effective if coupled with isolation. Isolation on the farm of origin after the pre -movement test and isolation on the new farm ahead of the post -movement test. Some doubts were raised as to how practical isolation is for most farmers
- Could there be separate markets (or separate areas at market) for animals that have been pre -movement tested?
- Pre-supposes an effective test. Is the test good enough?

6. Evaluation

Delegates were given an evaluation form to complete in the final 5 minutes of each event. There was an almost 100% response rate and feedback was very positive.

The results of this evaluation can be seen in Appendix 3.

7. Conclusion

The regional events brought together a wide range of different stakeholders. The events highlighted the complexity of the issues surrounding Bovine Tuberculosis and attempts to control it. They illustrated that there can be very different views not only between different categories of stakeholder (badger groups vs farmers), but also between groups of farmers from different parts of the country (areas with a long-term high incidence of TB to new hotspots to very low incidence areas).

However, the events also showed that there is considerable common ground and understanding between the different stakeholders at a local level and a willingness to work together to combat TB. There was a real appetite for more regional involvement in driving the new TB strategy through. Provided the stakeholders feel that the new TB strategy has taken their views on board, the regional meetings suggested that they will be prepared to take ownership of it at grass roots level and make it work.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Attendees by category and event

Appendix 2: Slides from PowerPoint presentations

Appendix 3: Evaluation

APPENDIX 1

Attendees by category and event

Categories	Shropshire	Epsom	Plymouth	Bristol	Newmarket	Thirsk	Kendal	TOTAL
Farmers (NFU/WFU/CLA/NBA)	19	11	39	29	9	11	24	142
Private Vets	13	4	9	6	4	9	9	54
Badger Groups	2	3	2	1	10	3	2	23
Deer Farmers	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	4
Other Wildlife Orgs	3	1	1	-	-	1	2	8
County Council/ Trading Standards/ Meat Hygiene/ Health Authority	3	-	4	7	4	2	6	26
Auctioneers/Valuers /Markets/Hauliers/ Abattoirs	1	-	2	3	-	1	3	10
Vet schools / Agri colleges	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	4
RSPCA/ RSPB	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2
Defra/SVS	13	8	10	6	6	8	11	62
Government Offices/RDS	-	-	-	1	2	4	2	8
Nat. Gamekeepers Organisation	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Farm Crisis Network	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
TOTAL	55	27	70	55	38	40	63	347

APPENDIX 2

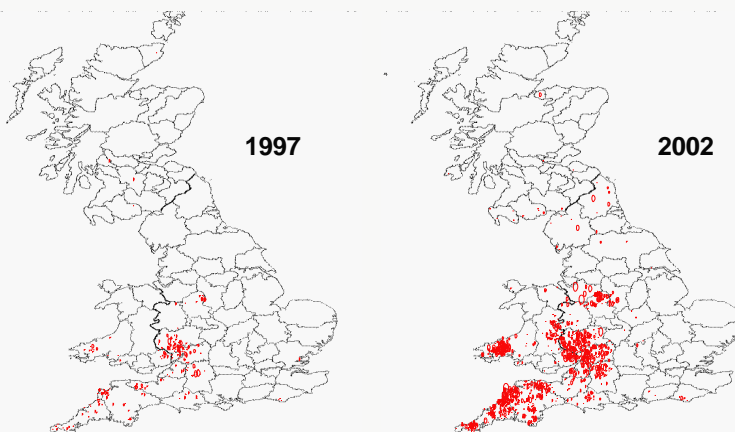
PowerPoint Presentation One (Regional Meetings): Preparing for a new GB strategy on bovine tuberculosis

Current TB strategy: 5 point plan

- Protecting human health
- Testing cattle and putting controls in place
- Research on bovine TB
- Developing a TB vaccine
- Randomised badger culling trial



Why review the TB strategy now?



A new TB strategy must:

- Define realistic aims
- Set targets
- Define roles and responsibilities
- Review regulatory framework
- Be based on best available scientific evidence
- Review arrangements for working in partnership



Key challenges

- How can we effectively tackle the continuing increase in bovine TB?
- How can we work together to help achieve this?



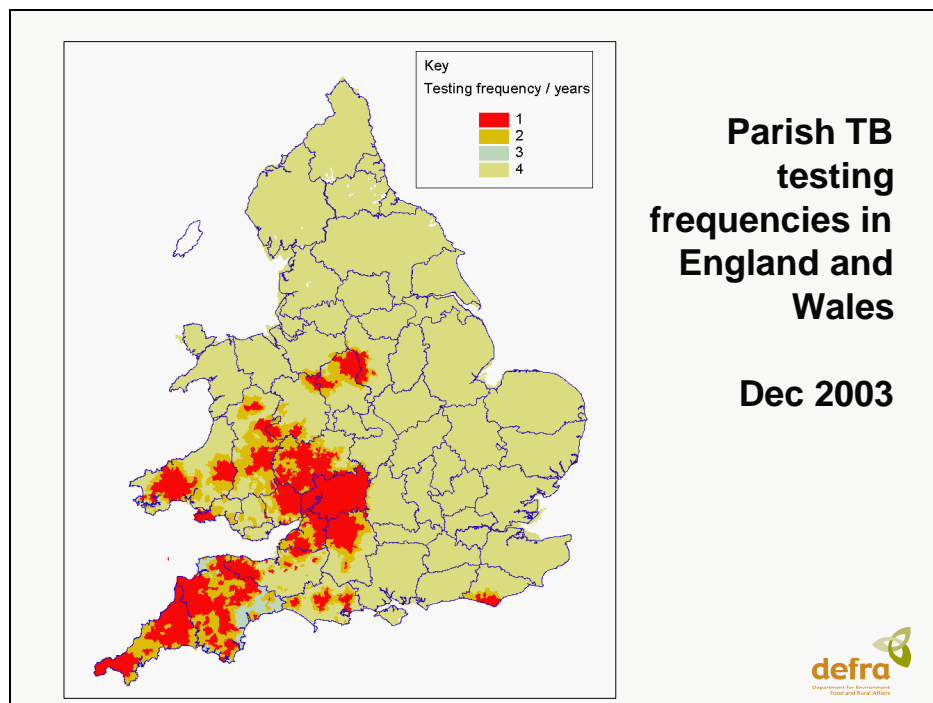
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**PowerPoint Presentation Two (Regional Meetings):
Short Term Measures; improving cattle surveillance and
reducing the risk of geographic measures.**

**Seven specific proposals with two
overall aims:**

Aim 1: Improved TB surveillance and
alignment with EU Directive

Aim 2: Reducing the geographic
spread of bovine TB from high to low
incidence areas



Aim 1: Improved TB surveillance and alignment with EU Directive

1. Restrictions if test becomes 1+ day overdue
2. Annual review of parish testing frequencies
3. Equalising the distribution of routine tests in 2, 3 and 4 yearly testing parishes
4. Test new or re-formed herds three times at 12-month intervals
5. No change to inconclusive reactor policy



Aim 2: Reducing geographic spread of bovine TB from high to low incidence areas

6. We propose to introduce a new strategy for early detection and prevention of developing TB “hotspots”. This involves:
 - (a) new criteria for identifying potential new hotspots; and
 - (b) new control measures to be implemented in those new hotspots



What criteria define a potential “hotspot”?

- Confirmed new incident involving VL reactors or culture positive slaughterhouse case
- New TB incident occurs in 3 or 4 yearly tested holding, at least 3 km from another incident confirmed in last 4 years
- New incident cannot be ascribed to cattle purchased during 2 months prior to disclosure



What measures do we propose to take to prevent development of TB “hotspots”?

- All herds within 3 km of the “index” case to have an immediate check test
- All herds passing this first check test to be re - tested 12 months later
- Carry out a survey of dead badgers (RTA and found dead)
- Remind local game dealers, stalkers, private veterinarians of legal duty to notify suspect TB in deer.



Aim 2: Reducing geographic spread of bovine TB (cont'd)

7. We propose to introduce a new strategy for early detection of infected cattle moving into “clean” areas. Defra considered six possible options:

- Zoning
- **Pre**-movement test all cattle moving out of 1&2 year testing herds
- **Post**-movement test for cattle moving out of 1&2 year testing herds into 3&4 year herds
- A combination of the second and third options
- **Pre- and post**- movement testing for **all** cattle
- **Pre**-movement test based on herd TB history



Aim 2: Reducing geographic spread of bovine TB from high to low incidence areas

Defra's preferred option:

Pre-movement testing of all cattle moving from 1 and 2 year testing herds to any other herd.

Questions for this afternoon's workshop:

- How can the the proposal for pre -movement testing be put into practice ?
- Why don't we do this already ?
- What are the barriers to making it work?
- What do we need to do to make it work ?



END

[copies of local situation powerpoint slides presented by State Veterinary Service DVMs or VOs are available by contacting Defra – tb.strategy@defra.gsi.gov.uk]

PowerPoint Presentation Three (National Meeting, 12 May 2004): Report back on themes from bovine TB strategy regional meetings in England

Long term (10 year) vision for bovine TB

- Achieved sustained reduction in incidence (ultimately eradication);
- Clean areas kept clean;
- Consumer confidence;
- Wildlife management in hotspots pending vaccination;
- Compensation;
- New relationships



How to achieve the vision?

- Tackle wildlife reservoir;
- Cattle husbandry, biosecurity and testing
- More information exchange;
- Better scientific understanding;
- Learn lessons from the past and other countries;
- Government to lead;
- Concessions needed by all stakeholders.



Barriers to achieving the long term vision:

- Limited resources;
- General public opinion on wildlife controls;
- Protection of Badgers Act
- 'Political will'



Reduce risk of geographic spread of disease through cattle movements

- Zoning
- **Pre-movement test all cattle moving from 1 -2 year tested herds**
- Post-movement testing cattle moving from 1 -2 year tested herds to 3-4 year tested herds
- Combination of 2nd and 3rd options
- Pre and post movement testing for all cattle
- Pre movement testing based on herd history



Discussion of preferred option

- Action needed to reduce risk of spread through cattle movements;
- Pre-movement testing generally preferred;
- Some interest in post-movement testing in clean areas;
- Zoning unworkable;



Pre-movement testing: issues

- Costs and who should pay;
- Veterinary resources;
- Stigma;
- Impact on auction markets;
- How to put into practice – cattle passport?



Some key points

- Shared responsibility???
- Better information exchange/dissemination
- Need for action to reduce risk of spread
- Value of promoting dialogue



END

APPENDIX 3

Bovine TB Strategy Regional Consultation Meetings (England)

EVALUATION FORM – all 7 evaluations combined

My occupation/interest today is : (tick more than one option if applicable)

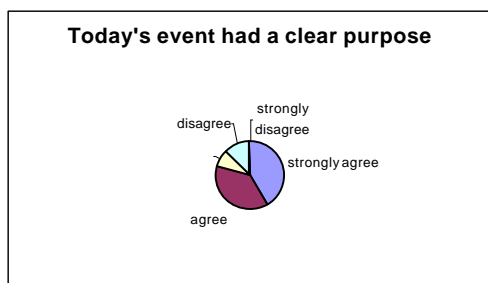
- § Vet [67]
- § Farmer [107]
- § Wildlife/environmentalist [34]
- § Local government [21]
- § Other [28]

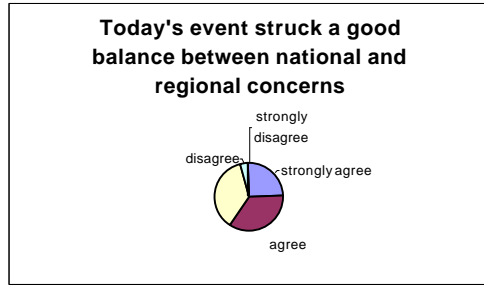
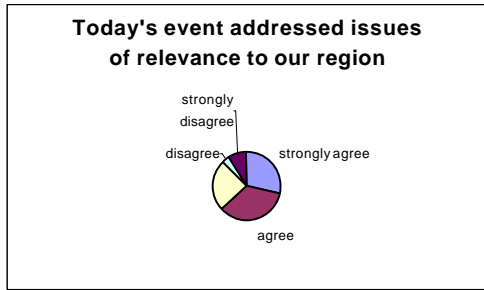
(Other:- Auctioneers, Police, Rural Accountant, College Lecturer, Research Biologist, SVS, Public Health, NFU, Holstein UK, University Vet)

1. Focus

Please indicate your opinion of the event below, where 1 is 'strongly agree' and 5 is 'strongly disagree'.

Today's event	1	2	3	4	5
• Had a clear purpose	113	99	31	13	2
• Dealt with issues of concern to me	82	106	44	17	4
• Addressed issues of relevance to our region	114	100	42	11	2
• Struck a good balance between national and regional concerns	62	113	66	14	3

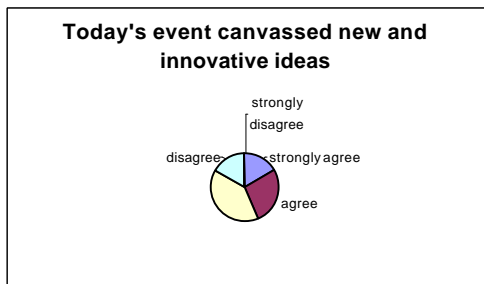
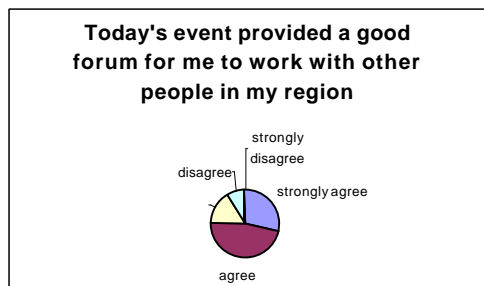
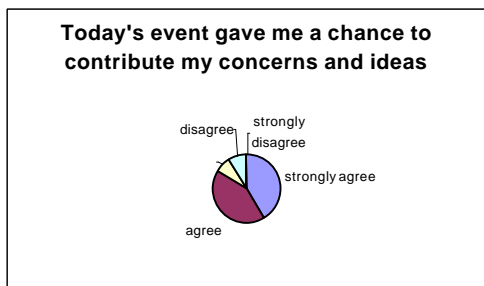




2. Process

Please indicate your opinion of the event below, where 1 is 'strongly agree' and 5 is 'strongly disagree'.

Today's event	1	2	3	4	5
• Gave me a chance to contribute my concerns and ideas	121	93	31	11	1
• Provided a good forum for me to work with other people in my region	93	108	41	11	3
• Canvassed new and innovative ideas	58	99	71	21	6
• Allowed participants to express a wide range of views	120	102	23	9	2
• Made it clear how the outcomes of the day will be used	50	81	72	41	18





3. Outcomes

Please indicate your opinion as below where 1 is 'certain to' and 5 is 'certain not to':

In my opinion today's event:

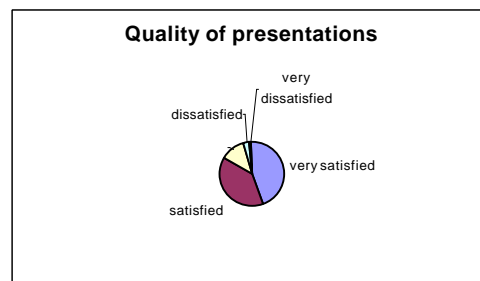
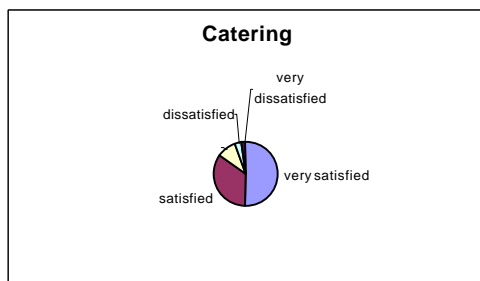
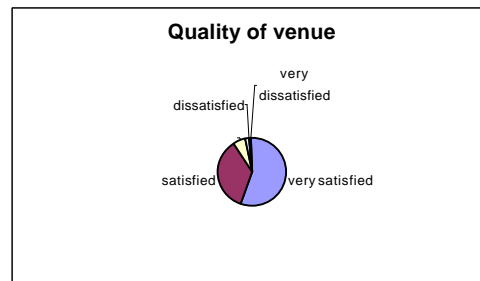
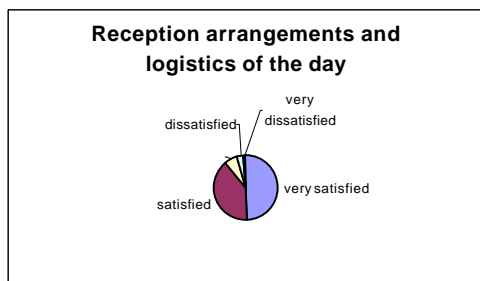
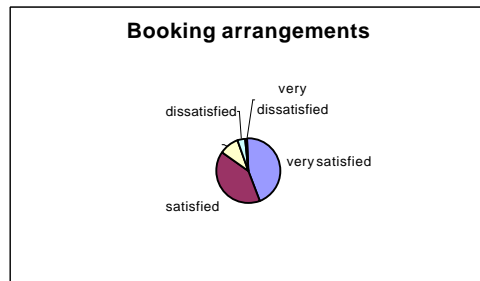
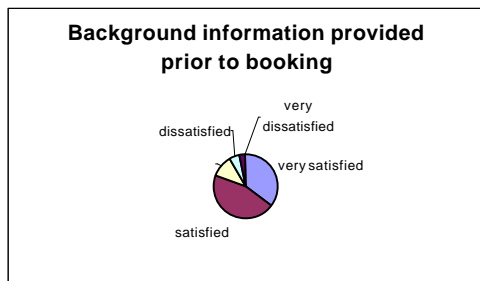
	1	2	3	4	5
• Allowed my views to be taken into consideration in developing a new national TB Strategy	37	80	93	32	7
• Will change my organisation's (or my own) behaviour or practice	11	41	99	51	26



4. Conference

Please indicate your opinion on below where 1 is 'very satisfied' and 5 is 'very dissatisfied'.

Were you satisfied with the:	1	2	3	4	5
• Background information provided prior to booking	88	110	28	15	6
• Booking arrangements	110	101	26	12	2
• Reception arrangements and logistics of the day	126	100	18	8	3
• Quality of venue	139	93	16	5	2
• Catering	129	88	26	9	5
• Quality of presentations	113	100	34	7	3
• Workshop sessions	89	93	28	10	1

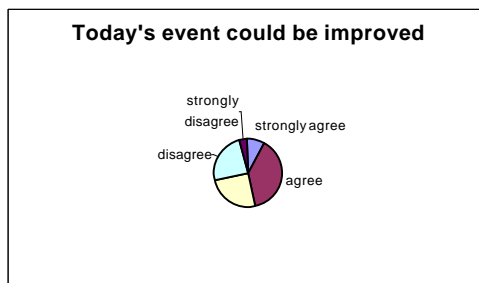
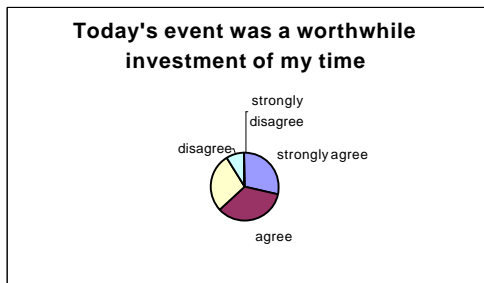




5. Overall

Please indicate your opinion of the event as below where 1 is 'strongly agree' and 5 is 'strongly disagree'.

Today's event:	1	2	3	4	5
• Broadened my understanding of how the new TB Strategy will be developed	69	106	61	12	6
• Was productive/constructive	59	99	65	20	1
• Was a worthwhile investment of my time	62	109	62	17	2
• Could be improved	16	66	86	49	16



If the day could be improved, how?

Shropshire

- I feel we were manipulated into giving a particular opinion
- Last part far too rushed, no time to discuss options fully
- Possibly move people round the tables
- Clearer areas for facilitators to record what was wanted – sometimes didn't record in an easily referred-to format
- I had doubts that DEFRA had already made up its mind about what would happen – reaction likely to be too slow
- Time management
- Difficult to prepare for it in advance, not knowing format
- Perhaps a little less 'music hall'/ laugh-a-minute, but ok – left people aware
- Provide delegate lists
- Devoting more time to discussion of the short-term control measures
- Would have liked to have been able to identify other wildlife interests present
- In workshop sessions tables too long to hear all the discussion, round tables better so that we could hear everything said
- Probably a good idea to have a facilitator but perhaps he could have given more time for different contributions rather than going over what had just been said
- Smaller more directed group
- Better venue
- To make very clear that this is more than just a public relations exercise

Epsom

- I live outside any TB high risk areas so I went to the meeting with ideas on how to keep it out of my area rather than how to control or eradicate it in problem areas – so my ideas didn't get an airing, but I will respond formally
- Weed out dominant individuals or try not to let them have too much time
- More environmentalists – most of us are not available on a weekday at such short notice
- Input from researchers re badger social group structure and behaviour/ movements (that suffer from TB) – and its relevance in TB transmission to cattle
- Need to be further convinced of government's commitment to TB eradication – not just control, including a genuine attempt to control the wildlife reservoir
- DEFRA openness
- Time of meeting and season – daytime is very difficult
- Timespan was too long – suggest 10.30 start, 3.30 finish, workshop sessions were too long
- Be more sensitive over timing – i.e. lambing and calving restricted farmers' attendance
- Start later in the day – be planned at a less busy time of year, more farmers would have attended. i.e. calving, lambing, drilling, fertilising.
- I thought the wildlife/ conservation lobby were under-represented. Most of us have jobs. For farmers/ vets/ Defra coming here was part of their job – but not so for wildlife

Plymouth

- Mediator a little too intrusive and spoke too much. Job is to facilitate discussion/contribution by participants.
- Clearer workshop group leadership.

Bristol

- Chairperson was too verbose and was inclined to put over his own views. Should have allowed more time 'from the floor'.
- Strategy asked 21 questions we only touched on a number of them.
- Some answers
- Will anyone listen? Lip service?

Newmarket

- Inadequate veterinary input on TB issues – intentionally and historically
- Out of >31 non Defra attendees there were 7 farmers. Need more input for specific to TB free/TB Endemic areas
- Guaranteed post hoc activity
- Make sure all interested parties have an input – did they all attend?
- Excellent venue and company! Pity we can't hear problems from infected areas
- By having more focussed groups dealing with the problems
- By telling the truth and addressing the real sources of the problem in the infected areas – this was not discussed
- Great day we all agree that TB should be eradicated

Thirsk

- Smaller tables
- More cost/benefit, modelling work prior to the final question being put
- Possibly more hard scientific facts on tap to reduce uninformed discussion
- More info on pre vs post testing modelling – risk assessment and benefits
- Ask fewer questions to allow more time for possibility of arriving at answers – maybe different questions to different tables.
- Occupation and organisation should be on badges
- Better presentation of facts of epidemiology of the disease and costs involved with various aspects of control would have been more than helpful

Kendal

- Wider group of involvement ie other Countryside Stakeholders & general public
- None
- By having a smaller number of participants, allowing more in depth discussion on relevant topics
- Name badges with indication of person role

6. Any other comments?

Shropshire

- I was pleased and excited about being involved in this strategy
- Thank you!
- LUI/ VO liaison should become the norm when new cases are revealed – it may be presumed that it happens, but it doesn't. Quality risk assessment involves LUI/ VO farmer discussion
- Nigel was the best discussion leader I have ever seen
- Many very relevant views from practical people were expressed. I sincerely hope that the eventual conclusions reflect the practical rather than the political
- Please do not let changes in policy interfere with the vital but delicate relationship between the small farmer and his vet practice
- Wildlife control must be taken into account if considerations to be accepted by farmers
- Good event!
- Must get away from the entrenched industry view that it's not our fault. That is as bad as the badger groups' entrenched views.

Epsom

- Needed a period for discussing people's ideas generally, not tied solely to the consultation document. Practical things which could be taken forward
- Excellent chairman
- Most farmers came with preconceived ideas (badgers) and wouldn't listen to other views. Chairman was excellent
- A very good way of attempting to implement/ create a policy. There is a need to show a concerted approach to TB control – testing/ culling of badgers in the interim before a vaccine is created. Goodwill will be difficult to maintain if DEFRA doesn't pay for pre-movement tests, does not start a concerted trial cull of badgers, with the expected start to give blanket flat-rate compensation for reactors, as opposed to the current system
- Chairman was excellent. Very worthwhile day, especially to meet and discuss with wildlife interest groups.
- Many of the concepts were familiar to me as I have been involved with TB for over 35 years, and am currently a member of the TB forum
- Time is of the essence
- Very well facilitated
- A very positive meeting which I think reached some common ground with the badger protection people. Perhaps grounds for setting up a local TB badger relations group
- Excellent chairman! I thought the farmers' 'cull them all!' brigade was not representative of all the farmers present, and flew in the face of comments from the vets.

Plymouth

- Pre-movement testing will not improve disease control.
- Well done Nigel Grinstead for facilitation.

- I have no faith in Defra 'Consultations' whatsoever. The 'professional compere' was a jack of all trades – and a good jack at that – but I doubt he knows the difference between a cow and a steer. In my opinion this was not conducive to constructive solutions.
- Excellent chairman – the key to the day.
- The only concern is whether or not the consultation will be listened to.
- The key speakers were in some cases ill informed of how TB affects farmers on the ground. As this event is the 3rd in a series this is rather surprising.
- We'll see if it was productive and we'll see if it allowed my views to be taken into account.
- This assesses the company which set up the format not its contents – which probably left most attendants feeling frustrated.

Bristol

- Very constructive and very well facilitated event. Defra must listen to the view that we need a whole package of actions including wildlife.
- It will be judged by results! How about making the Chief Veterinary's salary inversely proportional to the number of TB reactors? That would encourage leadership and results!
- Very useful mix of views expressed. Quite a lot of cynicism for it being a 'done deal'. Nigel did an excellent job as link.
- A master class in presenting led to preferred outcome to a potentially disagreeable audience.
- Not stop for lunch – had more time over working lunch.
- Nigel excellent – presentation very good HOWEVER no indication of government initiating badger culling – I feel a bit tickled.
- Well run – Nigel = outstanding. Spin doc!
- Concerned that this government will take no notice of our cries as they don't on any other issues.
- The MC for the day discouraged me by his too long introduction but then ran the day and stimulated comment very well indeed! Well done!
- Time will tell how constructive the day was
- Venue too expensive?
- Useful day on a difficult subject but need grouping.
- Did not address the serious problem in this area in the short term.
- Well run – made a change from the usual Defra guff.

Newmarket

- I only found out at last minute from the Police that the forum was being held. Not a very joined up department (Defra). Wider ranged discussion – more time needed for this though
- Stakeholders to include dairy farmers, beef suckler, beef fattener, beef finisher and bull beef. Try to have more farmers. Stakeholder meetings for above forming groups with input from badger/wildlife groups/LA's/SVS
- This was well organised & excellently facilitated
- It would be interesting and constructive for each regions' outcomes to be circulated in a general report
- Very useful informative day

- Would like to see another meeting next year to see how much progress has been made
- Zoning of East Anglia
- I was very pleasantly surprised with the event, I learnt a great deal on the subject. I was surprised to see that the badger groups put in an appearance and even more surprised that they ACCEPTED that badgers play a role in the problem. The format was excellent using a professional 'compere'. The vets spoke in a language that I could understand. I stayed awake and alert throughout!
- Would like to be considered for any follow-up sessions. I believe it is essential for us to be convinced that our efforts and ideas will be taken into account and updated
- Badger cull should stop and funding diverted into farmers practice via grants and benefits

Thirsk

- No expectation about gamma globulin – feel it could disappear as worthwhile research project? Already in use elsewhere
- Defra should pay 50% of costs – this is a response from a non farmer
- I have indicated that I did not feel that the event was constructive. This is not a comment on the day itself but rather on whether, and when any action will be taken as a result
- Is Defra consulting with Respiratory Division of Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (CDSC), of Health Protection Agency, Colindale, London, re human health? Prof John Watson would be the contact.
- Would like report back as to how the 'discussion' was reported and what action has been taken as a result if any.
- Very little input from Local Authority as at the end of the day it is us who will get the enforcement duty.
- Very concerned that the badger is still to be held up as the culprit. Need to develop the gamma interferon test
- Still wide disparity of views but if scientists can't agree what chance for the rest of us?

Kendal

- Any strategy implemented needs to be able to be effectively enforced either within existing resources or through additional funding via the framework agreement. Legislation should be simple and unambiguous.
- Best thing I've ever been to.
- Excellent presentation by Nigel Grinstead
- Had the feeling that the government had 'lead' opinion but were unlikely to modify their proposals as a result of today. Not enough evidence that the political climate is suitable to ensure that Zoonoses and welfare aspects of TB is taken seriously by government. A superficial activity to make it look as though Government is listening, their proposal was 'least cost'.
- I wish some of the views expressed would be implemented – but I feel budget will rule the day

- Presumably decisions already made and really an academic exercise in listening/open government
- I feel the public health/animal health risks need to be more clearly identified. In my opinion, vaccination has not been fully debated nor tried as a possible solution
- Wildlife issues were not really addressed – lack of research on wildlife vectors not discussed
- Always difficult to get all views represented consequently end up with too many people speaking with inevitable misunderstanding and evidence
- Lets see if these conferences have any affect in Defra's im plementations
- Impressed with whole set up and facilitation by Nigel. Good workshop
- Money matters too much and will be the biggest influence!
- I only hope that the consensus of opinion is acted on
- Very sceptical that any of the views expressed will be taken into account. Eventually it will mostly come down to cost v risk and will receive minimal funding. It is likely that Defra will look for a compromise – not a gold standard approach.
- I still have the perception that this was mostly a PR exercise & that t he draft strategy as proposed is already a 'done deal'