



Defra-funded survey for bovine TB in road-killed badgers: May 2017 Newsletter



****** More badgers are urgently needed from Hampshire & Berkshire ******

Update

- We are delighted to have now reached (and exceeded) our target in East Sussex and Oxfordshire, so are no longer accepting submissions from these counties. A massive thank you to everyone who has contributed to collecting in these areas.
- **We still urgently need badgers from Hampshire and Berkshire**, so please keep on collecting!
- The Hampshire and Berkshire surveys may be extended, we will confirm asap.
- We have a **new collection site** in Winchester, Hampshire
A: Hampshire Cultural Trust, Chilcomb House, Chilcomb Lane, Winchester. SO23 8RB
T: 01962 678189

We are very grateful to everyone who has taken to time to submit one or more badgers to us.



Surrey submissions to date

	Actual (25 th May 2017)	Target (31 st June 2017)
BERKS	11	100
BUCKS	96	100
E SUSSEX	100 (+41 extra)	100
HANTS	66	100
OXON	100 (+19 extra)	100
Total	373 (+60 extra)	500

Testing Update:

We have had one positive result from the samples that have reached the 12 week mark. The submission from East Sussex was positive for TB Complex.

Unusable carcasses:

Unusable submissions continue to be an issue. The badger carcass needs to be **fresh** enough to submit for *post mortem* examination and **the chest and abdomen should be intact**. Decomposing or extensively damaged carcasses should not be collected. As a general rule if the skin is discoloured (greenish) and/or both skin and hair can easily be pulled away from the carcass then it is not fresh enough for collection.

What are you testing?

We are collecting lymph nodes (17 per animal) plus any visible bovine tuberculosis (bTB)-type lesions and seeing if we can grow (culture) any bTB bacteria from these tissues in the laboratory. In some cases, no lesions are visible and culturing the bacteria is the only way to test whether or not a badger is infected.

How many strains of the bacteria are there?

There are a large number of strains of bTB, these are often due to subtle differences in the DNA sequence between strains. These are separated using several genetic tests. Different strains may be found in different geographical areas. This fact can be used to map the spread of the bacteria and determine whether the same strains of bTB are circulating within badgers and cattle in a particular area. The general belief is that all strains infect all species.

When will you know the results of the testing?

- Positive indications - 4 weeks
- True positives - 12 weeks

Effect of freezing:

Defra is aware that freezing has an effect on TB prevalence and this will be taken into account in any future policy decisions. More information is available in *Culling and cattle controls influence risk for badgers* by Woodroffe et al. PNAS Oct 3, 2006, vol. 103, no.40.

When will the results be published?

We aim to share the results of the study – although it should be remembered it can take several months to rule out infection, therefore the posting of meaningful results will take some time. The survey is expected to run until June 2017. It is anticipated that the University of Surrey and University of Nottingham will submit the results of this collaborative study to a peer-reviewed journal before the end of 2017.

How can I find out if the carcass I submitted has bTB?

Please keep a note of the cable tie number and e-mail badgerTB@surrey.ac.uk after 12 weeks.

What will be done with the carcasses after the TB testing?

Carcasses collected for this survey may also be used to study a range of other diseases and conditions, or to develop new diagnostic tests. These studies are not part of the Defra-funded survey.

Which areas are we focussing on?

The University of Surrey is collecting badger carcasses from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire and Oxfordshire.

Badger collection & the law

Advice from English Nature is that collecting a road-killed badger for this study is perfectly legal and does NOT require a license. However for more information about collecting badger carcasses and the law please see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/badgers-protection-surveys-and-licences>

Other interesting links:

The survey web-page:

<http://www.surreyvetpathology.com/pathology-services/defra-funded-badger-tb-survey>

A new study shows vitamin D could help control TB in animals:

<http://www.surrey.ac.uk/mediacentre/press/2016/new-study-shows-vitamin-d-could-help-control-tb-animals>

The University of Surrey Veterinary Pathology Centre:

<http://www.surreyvetpathology.com>

Who should I talk to if I have a question or to request more kits?Southern Edge Counties:

For Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire and Oxfordshire, please contact:

University of Surrey Veterinary Pathology Centre

Email: badgerTB@surrey.ac.uk

Telephone: 01483 689823

Website: www.surrey.ac.uk/vet/pathology-services/badgerTB

Northern Edge Counties:

For Cheshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire, contact:

University of Nottingham School of Veterinary Medicine and Science

Email: sv-badger@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

Website: www.nottingham.ac.uk/vet/badgerTB

Further information on bovine tuberculosis may be found at the [TB Hub](#).