

Badger FAQ

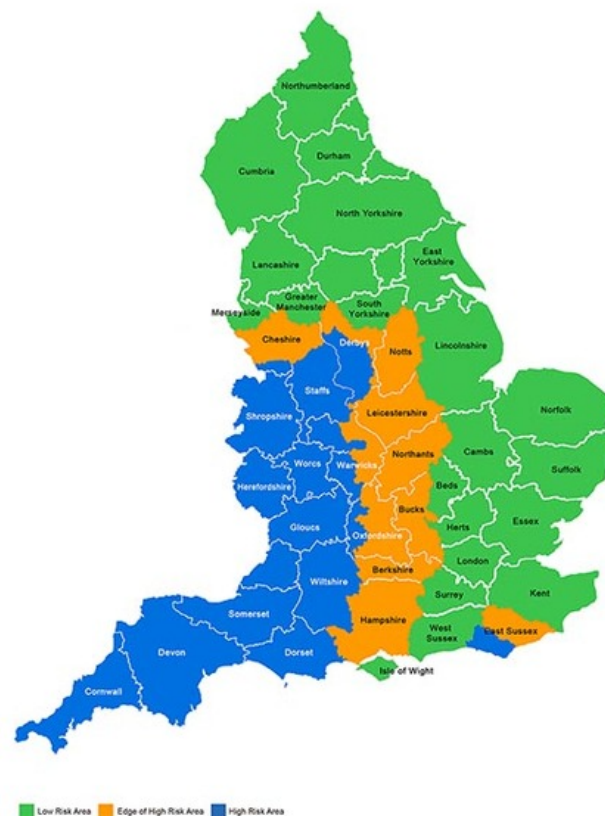
Why is it being done?

The prevalence and distribution of bTB (*Mycobacterium bovis* infection) in badgers living in the Edge Areas (i.e. the eleven counties of England adjoining the TB High Risk Area) of England is currently unknown, but may be of importance in any future TB control policy.

This Defra-funded survey aims to determine whether or not road-killed badgers in the bovine TB Edge Areas have TB, and if so, how common it is.

Who is involved in this survey?

The University of Surrey team is focusing on the southern 'Edge' counties while the University of Nottingham team, with colleagues at Liverpool, is covering the northern 'Edge' counties. A network of farmers, landowners, wildlife groups, animal health professionals and other stakeholder organisations has been established to collect fresh found-dead badger carcasses for examination at the collaborating universities.



Is it against the law to collect a badger carcass?

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

What if the badger is, or may have been, shot?

We are legally obliged to report the details of any carcasses showing evidence of illegal killing to the relevant authorities.

What are you testing?

We are collecting lymph nodes (17 per animal) and any visible 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 number of strains of bTB, and 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. 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

When will the results be published?

We aim to share the results of the study – although it should be considered that it can take several months to rule out infection. Therefore, the publishing 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 study to a Peer Review Journal before the end of 2017.

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

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

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 would not be part of the Defra-funded survey.

Who should I talk to if I have a question?

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, please 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](#).

Other interesting links:

The survey web-site:

<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>

If you are interested in taking part in survey please contact us at: badgerTB@surrey.ac.uk