



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

*The badgers are **OUT** and about now, don't forget to take your kits with you. Your collection does count!*

Update

The collaborating Universities have collected over **700** carcasses so far - and the University of Surrey has received its first ginger badger!

You can see the locations of the University of Surrey submissions building below.



Many thanks go out to our top collectors all of whom are from East Sussex! They are:

Rhiain Coundley, **Senlac Veterinary** Centre

Simon Winney, Hailsham

Clair Bancroft, **Senlac Veterinary** Centre

Tim Pitman, **Senlac Veterinary** Centre

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

Surrey submissions to date

	Actual (22 nd Mar 2017)	Target (31 st March 2017)
BERKS	6	50
BUCKS	48	50
E SUSSEX	114	50
HANTS	41	50
OXON	84	50
<u>To be collected</u>	<u>8</u>	
Total	301	250

Testing Update:

To date there is nothing new to report from either University – that is to say there are no positive isolates.

Unusable carcasses:

Unfortunately 7 of these carcasses were not useable at all and a number of others could only be partially used. Can we take this opportunity to remind you that the **badger carcase needs to be fresh enough to submit for post mortem examination and the chest and abdomen should still 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.

However, on a more cheerful note...

New Collection site added:

Westpoint Leighton Buzzard

T: 01296 410021

A: Unit 7b Sparrow Hall Farm, Edlesborough, **Dunstable**, Bedfordshire LU6 2ES

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, 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](#).