

Meeting with DEFRA, December 2006

John Gallagher, John Daykin and Lewis Thomas, representing VAWM, met with various senior officials, from the TB division of DEFRA at Page Street on December 6, 2006 for a discussion on bovine tuberculosis.

We reiterated our concern that no control of the disease will be possible unless and until the vast reservoir of infection in the badger population is removed and that further refinement of cattle control measures cannot alone be expected to bring about a long term solution. We also repeated our view that little could be usefully learnt from the hopelessly flawed Randomised Badger Culling Trials. In return we heard of progress being made by DEFRA on further cattle controls, culling methods for badgers, vaccination and the PCR test but no positive strategy on tackling the reservoir of infection in badgers was offered. Therefore the following statement by the Minister, Ben Bradshaw, in his letter to us on behalf of the Secretary of State, last August, would still seem to apply:

"We aim to base a decision for a potential badger cull on a sound scientific and practical foundation and we are not yet in a position to do this"

When this position might be reached was not revealed to us.