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Food & Rural Affairs

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## **Defra bovine TB citizen dialogue**

### **Stakeholder workshops**

**April 2014**

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# Executive summary

This report summarises stakeholder views on Defra's draft Strategy for achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis-Free (OTF) status for England.<sup>1</sup> In July 2013 Defra published its draft Strategy for achieving OTF status for England. The stated aim of the Strategy is to eradicate bovine tuberculosis (bTB), achieving OTF status for England incrementally, whilst maintaining a sustainable livestock industry. The Strategy is intended to counter the rising trend of bTB incidence in certain areas of England using a comprehensive, staged and risk-based approach. Although the risks of bTB to public health today are low, the disease continues to have economic, environmental and social implications.

## About the dialogue

In June 2013, the OPM Group (Office for Public Management and Dialogue by Design) was commissioned by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), with part-funding and support from Sciencewise, to conduct a citizen dialogue project on the future strategic direction of bTB. This dialogue aimed to engage a broad range of stakeholders and publics in the debate about bTB control measures and the future bTB eradication Strategy, and consisted of three strands: stakeholder workshops, reconvened public workshops, and online public engagement.

The stakeholder workshops took place in September 2013 in ten locations across England. Workshop locations were selected to ensure coverage of the three geographical areas defined in the draft Strategy: High Risk Area, the Edge Area and the Low Risk Area<sup>2</sup>.

The workshops aimed to explore stakeholder views on Defra's draft Strategy. The outputs from these workshops will feed into Defra's wider consultation findings, alongside Defra's online consultation on the draft Strategy which took place 4 July - 26 September 2013.

The workshops were attended by a range of stakeholders, 258 people in total, including farmers and farming organisations, vets and veterinary organisations, wildlife and environment organisations, local authorities, supply chain representatives and academics. The mix of stakeholders varied across the workshops: for example, the Frome workshop saw a more diverse mix of stakeholders than the Launceston workshop, in which farmers and vets predominated. These findings are qualitative and are not intended to be representative.

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<sup>1</sup> Companion reports to this one include the Public Workshops Report which presents the findings from workshops with three different sets of public participants, the Online Engagement Report which presents the findings from online engagement conducted with a set of public participants, and a higher level combined report, which draws out the findings from all three strands of the dialogue.

<sup>2</sup> Each area has its own objectives and sub-strategy that supports the Strategy's overarching aim. Please see Appendix 4 for the map of England showing the boundaries of the three risk areas.

The main themes emerging from the dialogue have been summarised below and are expanded upon in the body of the report.

## **Cattle controls and surveillance**

Five main messages emerged relating to cattle controls and surveillance:

1. There was support for measures to encourage wider adoption of risk-based practices, driven by the feeling that a small number of farmers do engage in risky practices and this undermines the efforts of the majority. However, stakeholders in the High Risk Area felt that such measures could penalise farmers in these areas.
2. There was support for more localised strategies, informed by improved epidemiological investigations following identification of bTB infection in a herd. However, some felt that the geographical boundaries of the three risk areas set out in the Strategy could be improved by taking into account contextual factors such as the boundaries of farms and whether these boundaries crossed risk areas.
3. There was widespread support amongst participants for enhanced slaughterhouse surveillance and closer monitoring of slaughterhouse performance.
4. There was general support for increased routine testing and surveillance in the Low Risk Area in order to identify outbreaks at the earliest possible opportunity.
5. Some stakeholders felt that a stricter cattle control regime in the High Risk Area would be undermined by the prevalence of bTB in local wildlife, posing a threat of badger-to-cattle transmission.

## **Badger controls and surveillance**

There were four main messages relating to badger controls and surveillance:

1. Stakeholders agreed on the need for better surveillance of bTB in badgers. They felt there was currently little understanding about the infection status of badgers and the role that badgers play in the spread of infection to cattle.
2. In general, stakeholders agreed that it was important to tackle the risk posed by badgers, but opinions differed on the most appropriate approach to take.
3. Some stakeholders called for the wider roll out of the badger cull subject to successful pilots, and for measures which went further, including relaxed culling licences, the repeal of the Protection of Badgers Act, and the use of sett-based alternative culling methods. These stakeholders - mainly vets and those from the farming industry - saw wildlife control as a pivotal part of the Strategy's success and many felt that Defra's proposed measures could go further.
4. Wildlife groups were broadly very strongly opposed to badger culling and called for greater focus on cattle control measures and the wider deployment of a badger TB

vaccination programme. They contended that badger culling would not reduce the disease incidence in cattle to the extent stated by Defra, due to perturbation and the use of a different methodology and management process to that used during the Randomised Badger Culling Trial. They also sent a strong message that the potential role of vaccination had been downplayed in the Strategy.

## Governance, delivery and funding

Five broad messages emerged relating to governance, delivery and funding:

1. Most stakeholders agreed that a successful eradication strategy relied on them working together with government. They supported Defra's proposal for more partnership working, which they thought would secure continuity of the Strategy. Removing the politics from bTB was considered by most participants to be an essential prerequisite for the success of any eradication strategy, particularly given the length of the programme.
2. Questions were raised about what 'greater partnership working' meant in practice. Many participants felt that Defra's proposal for increased partnership working was open to interpretation: farming industry stakeholders in particular were reluctant to support wholeheartedly a proposal which they felt could lead to higher costs to the farming industry without any commensurate increase in influence. Some stakeholders were very wary about entering into a partnership arrangement. They felt that government inaction had led to the current bTB problems and the solution was therefore government's responsibility.
3. Stakeholders were broadly supportive of the introduction of local eradication boards. These were seen as a useful way to connect local implementation with the national programme for eradication, and a vehicle for increasing the influence of those best placed to understand the disease, such as farmers, vets and other professionals who deal with it on the ground. Stakeholders stipulated a number of conditions that would need to be in place to ensure their success: most importantly, the boards would need to have real power and influence over implementation in their area. Most agreed that the boards should consist of a mix of local stakeholder groups, although the inclusion of wildlife groups was met with some resistance in the High Risk Areas.
4. Stakeholders were on the whole opposed to paying more towards bTB controls at this time. Some saw it as a government or taxpayer problem and therefore one that stakeholders should not have to pay for. Others emphasised the existing financial burden on farmers and argued that adding further bTB costs would have a negative impact on the viability of the farming industry.
5. Some stakeholders were willing to accept a greater proportion of the costs only if this was matched by increased influence and decision-making power. Other conditions they felt should be met if they were to assume more of the costs of the eradication included more transparency from Defra regarding spending on bTB and

more industry input into which areas of the bTB eradication Defra should fund. The establishment of a mutual bTB fund was popular among stakeholders who recognised the need for any additional cost burden to be shared between all stakeholder groups, including supermarkets, which were seen as key beneficiaries of a healthy beef and dairy farming sector.

## Communicating the Strategy

Stakeholders raised three main points in relation to the communication of information about bTB to the public:

1. Effective public communication of accurate information about bTB and its controls was a common theme across workshops. Stakeholders expressed a strong desire for Defra to improve their outward communication of the Strategy, including information on the extent of the bTB crisis and the implications for the livestock industry, the taxpayer and society more widely.
2. Many farming industry stakeholders blamed biased communication in the media for the negative image of farmers in England generally. Farmers in particular felt that a positive image of badgers in the media had contributed to what they saw as strong public opposition to badger culls.
3. Stakeholders, particularly farmers, thought it was important for Defra to 'humanise' the Strategy, by communicating the work done by farmers to control bTB and the financial and psychological impact of bTB on farmers and other professionals associated with its control. Farmers at the workshops expressed frustration that, as they saw it, the public were not being given all of the information that they needed to understand the issue.

## Reflection on the objectives

The objectives of the stakeholder engagement strand of this project are:

- To hear and understand stakeholder views on Defra's draft Strategy for Achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis-Free (OTF) Status for England published on 4th July 2013.
- To enable participants to discuss the draft Strategy with a range of stakeholders, providing them with an opportunity to hear other perspectives.
- To explore the differences in views and the potential for consensus regarding the best measures to achieve OTF status for England.
- To provide additional qualitative data to complement formal consultation submissions.

Some of these objectives are about the value and success of the engagement process and the way in which this report captures the views of participants. Others concern the way in which the findings contained in this report are used by policy-makers to inform the development of the draft Strategy by complementing submissions to the formal consultation.



We reflect briefly on some of the ways in which the objectives were addressed during the dialogue, under the following headings:

- Enabling discussion across stakeholder groups
- Exploring shared and different views
- Opportunities for building trust (overall project objective: see Introduction.)

## **Enabling discussion across stakeholder groups**

Participants in these workshops valued the opportunity to contribute their views on the draft Strategy: sharing views, hearing others' perspectives and comparing experiences were important features in their success. There were occasions on which this worked less well. All stakeholders respond emotionally to the disease and its impacts; and the control measures and the different interests and impacts on different stakeholders meant that there were a few occasions when anger or frustration spilled over into the discussion.

## **Exploring shared and different views**

For most participants the opportunity to hear other perspectives and explore views – whether shared or contrasting – seemed to be welcome. On some issues there was broad agreement – for example, on the importance of using a wide range of control measures, including in relation to wildlife. On others – such as the appropriate control measures to address bTB infection in badgers – stakeholders' views diverged, with wildlife groups preferring badger vaccination and farmers and most vets favouring culling.

## **Opportunities for building trust**

Most participants welcomed this opportunity to discuss the future development of the Strategy. The extent to which it provides a basis for increasing trust will depend - in part, at least - on whether stakeholders continue to be involved over time and on whether the issues they raised in this project are reflected in the evolution of the Strategy.

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## Background

### Bovine TB in England

Across Europe many countries have been declared bovine TB (bTB) free. However the UK continues to face significant challenges in eradicating the disease. The incidence of bTB in UK cattle has been growing since the 1980s, with outbreaks clustered in hot spots in the South-West and West of England and Wales<sup>3</sup>.

Although the risks of bTB to public health today are low, the disease continues to have economic, environmental and social implications. In 2012, measures to control the disease resulted in the testing of 5.8 million cattle and the slaughter of 28,000 animals at a cost of £100 million to the UK taxpayer. BTB poses a risk to the beef, dairy and live export trade and the Government continues to face international pressure to comply with EU regulations and progress towards eradication.

### Defra's draft Strategy for eradicating bTB in England

In July 2013 Defra published its draft Strategy for achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis-Free (OTF) status for England. The aim of the Strategy is “to eradicate bTB, achieving OTF Status for England incrementally, whilst maintaining a sustainable livestock industry”. The Strategy sets out how the aim will be achieved through greater partnership working, increasingly industry-led implementation and fair sharing of the associated costs.

An online public [consultation](#) was run from 4 July to 26 September 2013 to seek views on Defra's draft Strategy document.

### The pilot badger culls

In December 2011, Defra announced that culling would be carried out as part of a policy of badger control. Pilot badger culls began in Gloucestershire and Somerset in August/September 2013. Licences issued by Natural England allowed trained operators, employed by farmer-led companies, to carry out controlled shooting of free-ranging badgers, with the costs being borne by farmers and landowners. The decision on a wider roll out of controlled shooting as a culling method will follow a report delivered by the Independent Expert Panel on its effectiveness, humaneness and safety.

Badger cull policy was covered extensively in the mainstream media and political debate with vocal opposition from sections of the scientific community, campaign groups and a

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69443/pb13601-bovinetb-eradication-programme-110719.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69443/pb13601-bovinetb-eradication-programme-110719.pdf)

public e-petition gathering over 300,000 signatures<sup>4</sup>. Both the proponents of the badger cull policy and its opponents claim scientific foundations for their argument and both sides have interpreted the results of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT) in their favour. The debate around the badger cull was therefore a focus for participants and was raised at every workshop. However, the focus of this project was on the raft of measures outlined in the draft Strategy for the eradication of bTB, in which badger control measures – including culling – are only one element.

## About the wider dialogue project

The stakeholder workshops which are the subject of this report were part of a wider citizen dialogue project on the future strategic direction of bTB. The dialogue, commissioned by Defra and part-funded by Sciencewise-ERC<sup>5</sup>, aimed to engage a broad range of publics<sup>6</sup> in the debate about bTB control measures and the future bTB eradication strategy. Those involved included people directly affected by bTB, such as farmers, vets and members of environmental and wildlife groups, as well as those whose interest reflects their role as citizens and taxpayers.

The dialogue consisted of three strands:

1. Ten stakeholder workshops
2. Three sets of reconvened public dialogue workshops
3. Online public engagement.

This dialogue project builds upon the ‘Call for views on strengthening our TB eradication programme and new ways of working’, carried out in Autumn 2012 on behalf of the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England.

The overall objectives for the citizen dialogue project were:

- To engage the general public and stakeholders in understanding, deliberating on and contributing to the future strategic development of England’s bTB policy and strategy.
- To inform Defra’s development of a comprehensive bTB eradication Strategy.
- To develop and appraise opportunities to build a trust relationship between the general public, stakeholders, and government in developing policy options for animal disease control.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/38257>

<sup>5</sup> The Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre (Sciencewise-ERC) is funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). Sciencewise-ERC aims to improve policy making involving science and technology across Government by increasing the effectiveness with which public dialogue is used, and encouraging its wider use where appropriate to ensure public views are considered as part of the evidence base. It provides a wide range of information, advice, guidance and support services aimed at policy makers and all the different stakeholders involved in science and technology policy making, including the public. The Sciencewise-ERC also provides co-funding to Government departments and agencies to develop and commission public dialogue activities. [www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk](http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk)

<sup>6</sup> The term ‘publics’ is used to emphasise the diversity of those participating in dialogue and to avoid the suggestion that there is a unified ‘Public’. A useful starting point for exploring the distinction between ‘publics’ and ‘Public’ further can be found at the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/what/who-are-the-public>

## About the stakeholder workshops

Throughout September 2013, the OPM Group ran ten stakeholder workshops across England. Each workshop lasted four and a half hours and involved 20-30 stakeholders. Participants in the stakeholder workshops were self-selecting and included local farmers, vets, conservation and wildlife groups, County Councils and supply chain representatives. Events were advertised widely and relevant organisations were contacted directly with the aim of getting representation from a range of stakeholder groups at each workshop, but the balance of these stakeholder groups did vary by location. For example, the Frome workshop was attended by more representatives from wildlife groups than the other workshops. Every effort was however made to recruit representatives from organisations across the spectrum of opinion. Please see Appendix 3 for the recruitment and sampling strategy.

The workshops were also attended by a small number of Defra officials and the AHVLA (who were there to observe and respond to questions, where appropriate) and facilitators from the OPM Group.<sup>7</sup>

The objectives of the workshops were as follows:

- To hear and understand stakeholder views on Defra's draft Strategy for Achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis-Free (OTF) Status for England published on 4 July 2013.
- To enable participants to discuss the draft Strategy with a range of stakeholders, providing them with an opportunity to hear other perspectives.
- To explore the differences in views and the potential for consensus regarding the best measures to achieve OTF status for England.
- To provide additional qualitative data to complement formal consultation submissions.

Outputs from the stakeholder workshops will be considered alongside the findings from Defra's formal consultation on a draft bTB Strategy for England, which took place in summer 2013, to inform the development of the final Strategy for bTB.

Workshop locations were selected by Defra to ensure coverage of the three risk areas as these are defined in the draft Strategy:

1. **High Risk Area (HRA):** concentrated in the South West, West Midlands and East Sussex. bTB is endemic here. A relatively high proportion of herds experience breakdowns, including repeat breakdowns, and there is a reservoir of infection in badgers.
2. **Edge Area:** covers the boundary of the High and Low Risk Areas. It marks the area where infection is spreading outward from the High Risk Area.

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<sup>7</sup> The detailed agenda for the stakeholder workshops can be found in Appendix 1.

3. **Low Risk Area (LRA):** currently extends across the North and East of England. The prevalence of bTB is very low with most cases linked to animals being introduced from higher risk herds. Breakdowns tend to be relatively short. There is not a recognised reservoir of the disease in wildlife in the Low Risk Area.

The list of locations is included in Appendix 2.

## About this report

This report has two main sections: [Chapter 2](#) deals with stakeholders' views on bTB control measures, and [Chapter 3](#) covers stakeholder comments on governance, delivery and funding models. [Chapter 4](#) summarises the main messages emerging from the stakeholder workshops and reflects on the objectives of this dialogue strand. The appendices provide a detailed description of the methodology, the recruitment process and the participants.

This report describes the findings from across ten locations. The discussions that took place were varied and wide-ranging and we have not been able to include in this report all of the points made. We have sought to include all of those issues that are material to the proposals in the Strategy. Where possible and where differences are of particular interest, we have drawn out particular comments, issues or attitudes from individual workshops.

Breakout groups at each workshop included a mix of participants from a range of different stakeholder groups. We have not, therefore, been able to assign every view expressed and reported here to a particular stakeholder group. On most topics, all participants in any single stakeholder group did not share a single view. Where it is possible to attribute broad positions to one or more particular stakeholder group we have done so: in other cases we have used the generic term 'stakeholder' to indicate views held by stakeholders from a mix of groups.

A large quantity of data was generated over the course of the 10 workshops and, of necessity, some detail has been excluded from this report. Additional information about the discussions can be found in the individual reports produced after each workshop, which have been sent to the participants.

Non-attributable quotes from participants are used throughout the text to exemplify certain issues.

# Chapter 2 Bovine TB control measures

## Introduction

This chapter reports on stakeholders' views on the proposed 'risk-based approach', before looking at views on the control measures in more detail.

In its draft Strategy, Defra sets out a risk-based approach to controlling bTB. This approach defines three different risk areas in England: the Low Risk, High Risk or Edge of High Risk ('Edge'). The Strategy proposes sub-strategies for each risk area, each of these comprising a package of control measures tailored to the disease profile of the area.

We have grouped the control measures from all risk areas under the following eight headings:

- Voluntary risk-based trading
- Linking compensation to biosecurity
- Cattle testing and surveillance
- Breakdown management and investigations
- Wildlife surveillance and control
- Surveillance of non-bovine farmed animals
- Local eradication strategies
- Slaughterhouse surveillance

## Overview

Risk-based trading, linking top-up compensation to biosecurity, and the importance of increasing wildlife surveillance and control were the most-discussed measures across workshops. The latter was a particular focus in the High Risk Area (HRA) workshops, whereas participants in the Low Risk Area (LRA) workshops focussed more on cattle control measures.

Widely supported measures included the introduction of more information for farmers on cattle purchases at the point of sale, and better surveillance of TB in wildlife and non-bovine farmed animals. Proposals to improve investigations following breakdown were also seen as an important way of increasing our understanding of transmission routes, with findings being used to develop tailored local eradication strategies.

There was least consensus on the best approach to controlling the risk from wildlife. Whilst there was strong support from many participants across all risk areas for the wider roll out of the pilot badger culls, there was keen opposition to this point from some stakeholders, particularly those representing wildlife groups.

Mixed views also arose on the proposed measures to link compensation to biosecurity and to introduce more rigorous testing and breakdown management. Stakeholders who were

critical of these measures were primarily concerned with the negative implications for farmers in the High Risk Area, and their ability to trade across the country and resume business following breakdowns.

## The risk-based approach

There was general support for more localised strategies. Stakeholders in workshops across the three risk areas raised concerns about the risk areas set out in the Strategy, with some questioning the usefulness of risk zones.

Some questioned the geographical boundaries for bTB risk (set out in the Strategy). They argued that these boundaries were drawn arbitrarily without sufficient consideration of contextual factors. Some stakeholders argued that borders should follow the boundaries of farms and grazing land, taking into account that larger herds can span across current risk borders. Others suggested that the boundaries be redrawn to account for local disease patterns.

Some argued that the measures imposed in one area have implications across the country - a point raised most prominently in the Edge Area, as explained by one participant:

*“Saying that we are in the Edge Area creates the impression that we are in neutral ground, but we are not. What happened in the High Risk Area also has an enormous influence here.”* (Edge Area)

Others cautioned against premature use of the language ‘low risk’ and ‘TB Free’ to describe large areas of the country, until such a time when disease spread has been contained and there is a better understanding of transmission routes.

## Voluntary risk-based trading

Under the advice of the industry-led Risk-Based Trading Group, Defra has decided to deploy voluntary risk-based trading<sup>8</sup> to all High, Edge and Low Risk Areas across the country.<sup>9</sup>

Generally, once the principles and practicalities of voluntary risk-based trading had been explained, stakeholders were positive about its introduction, although there were questions and concerns about non-compliance, the method for calculating risk and the introduction of a two-tier trading system.

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<sup>8</sup> Information about a herd's risk status will be made available at the point of sale, with a longer term plan to make this information available to farmers through a comprehensive database. The measure aims to give farmers the information they need to assess the risk of their purchases, and to deter trading practices that will increase disease spread.

<sup>9</sup> The text boxes throughout Chapter 2 contain summaries of control measures relevant to each subsection. The summaries were written by the OPM Group and are based on the more detailed descriptions of the control measures included in Annex H of the draft Strategy document.



Risk-based trading was thought to be particularly beneficial in the Low Risk Area, partly because stakeholders felt that farmers in these areas were less practiced in thinking about bTB risk. In general, participants were in favour of having more information available at the point of sale. Many farmers felt that, with the current levels of information, they had no way of knowing the status of animals purchased under the current system. Specific information requested included: when the animal was last tested, whether the animal had ever lived in a High Risk Area, whether it was on a secure unit at a previous farm, and whether it had been pre-movement tested.

Support was shown for the introduction of a well-managed central database and stakeholders felt that this should be prioritised so that it can be implemented quickly. Some suggestions were made about how this measure might be implemented in practice, with a number of people saying that cattle passports should be used as a vehicle for increased information-sharing. Others considered more innovative approaches such as a mobile phone application - updated in real time - to facilitate the tracking of individual animals.

Concerns about uptake and usage of the scheme were raised in all risk areas. Predictions were made that some vendors would be unwilling to provide information about their herd's history, and that some purchasers would be willing to engage in risky practices in return for cheaper cattle. To counteract this, many stakeholders expressed a strong preference for compulsory rather than voluntary risk-based trading. This view tended to predominate in the Low Risk and Edge Areas and was very much less evident in High Risk Areas. As one participant argued:

*“A statutory system is the only way that we can really ensure that farmers and purchasers can confidently make informed decisions and act responsibly.” (Edge Area)*

A number of participants from all risk areas asked about the methods used to calculate a herd's risk. There was a consensus that this should be determined on a herd-by-herd basis rather than by risk area, as participants were keen not to penalise the farmers with low risk herds located in the High Risk Areas. Further questions were raised about the validity of the risk classifications and some asked for these definitions to be agreed across the AHVLA, Defra and industry.

Stakeholders in all areas noted the negative impact of risk-based trading on farmers with high risk herds. This was a particular concern for those in the High Risk Area. Here, participants argued that risk-based trading would lead to a two-tier trading system, unfairly penalising farmers who were at higher risk of a breakdown. However, many people noted that risk-based trading is already taking place, as farmers in the Low Risk Areas are reluctant to buy from bTB hotspots. Implementing risk-based trading on a herd-by-herd basis would at least protect those farmers with low risk herds living in High Risk Areas from discrimination at market.

## Linking compensation to biosecurity

Defra proposes using the level of compensation paid to farmers as a tool to reward



risk reduction and to penalise risky practices, across all risk areas. This would be possible by lowering the compensation to salvage value as a default, with a premium paid to farmers who comply with 'best practice' on biosecurity, including for example risk-based trading.

Stakeholders were generally supportive of encouraging good biosecurity practice, but there were mixed views on linking compensation to biosecurity as a specific way of doing this. Some saw it as an effective way of incentivising 'problem farmers' to adopt risk-reducing practices, whereas others felt it would be difficult to define and measure good biosecurity and that reducing compensation would discriminate against certain types of farmer.

Participants from the Low Risk Area were more supportive of linking compensation to the level and quality of biosecurity measures, although responses were still varied within the workshops. Those who supported this measure thought that a financial incentive would encourage farmers to adhere to good biosecurity standards. As one low risk farmer commented:

*"Money talks - problem farmers will hopefully be incentivised with this measure, they will think 'if I do the extra work I will get payback at the end of the day.'" (Low Risk)*

Some stakeholders felt that it was neither fair nor realistic to link compensation to biosecurity measures. Some challenged the assumption that biosecurity provided effective protection against the risk of infection, pointing out that farmers can have high biosecurity standards and still fail to keep their herd isolated from the surrounding wildlife reservoir. Others argued that biosecurity standards would be difficult to measure and enforce.

Across all workshops, participants voiced concerns that in practice this measure could discriminate against particular types of farmers. These included farmers in the hotspot areas who would be susceptible to cycles of repeated outbreaks and compensation payments too low to enable them to restock their herd. Dairy farmers were also seen as likely to suffer disproportionately from this measure: some stakeholders argued that separating and isolating dairy herds can be more problematic than with beef cattle herds. Others were concerned that farmers with small or older cattle carrying less meat would receive lower salvage values for their carcasses.

Some stakeholders argued that Defra should give better support to farmers to improve their biosecurity standards. One suggestion was for Defra to provide capital grants to farmers with low incomes to undertake biosecurity work. Some participants requested more information defining what good biosecurity is and how it would be measured, concluding that Defra should educate farmers and inform them of the criteria for best practice before penalising individuals with reduced compensation.

Some stakeholders felt that linking compensation to voluntary biosecurity measures such as risk-based trading made no sense: they felt that the use of penalties would be more coherent if risk-based trading was made compulsory.

## Cattle testing and surveillance

The draft Strategy proposes a range of measures that, if deployed, will have an impact on the way cattle are tested across the Low, Edge and High Risk Areas.

These include:

- The increased testing of cattle moving from the High Risk Area to the Low Risk Area by introducing compulsory post-movement testing, and reducing the exemptions to pre-movement testing.
- Applying additional surveillance testing to herds perceived to be of a higher risk, such as: herds in the Low Risk Area that regularly import stock from the High Risk Area; and herds in the Edge Area that fall within a 3km radius of breakdown herds.
- Using more rigorous testing including the use of interferon-gamma assay parallel testing in confirmed breakdowns and discretionary interferon-gamma assay testing in bTB free suspended herds within the Edge Area, and checking testing at the severe interpretation for bTB free suspended herds in the Edge Area after restrictions are lifted.
- Adjusting the time taken between testing for example by extending time intervals between the intensive testing of breakdown herds in the High Risk Area.

There was general support across workshops for increased testing and surveillance in the Low Risk Area, for example through compulsory post-movement testing of cattle bought from the High Risk Area and increased surveillance of certain Low Risk Area herds. Proposals to increase testing in the High Risk Area met with more mixed views: Low Risk Area workshop participants supported increased testing in the High Risk Area, whereas High Risk Area workshop participants felt that a stricter testing regime in the High Risk Area would be undermined by the prevalence of bTB in local wildlife. Stakeholders across all risk areas also raised some concerns about the efficacy of the skin test.

### Compulsory post-movement testing

Participants were largely positive about introducing compulsory post-movement testing of cattle moved from the High Risk Area. Some wanted to see post-movement testing of all cattle, regardless of the risk profile of their area of origin. Low risk stakeholders did not think that this additional testing stage would deter them from buying from the High Risk Area. In the Norwich workshop in particular, farming industry stakeholders said that they had to buy from the South West of England anyway, because that was where the majority of the cattle were. Stakeholders saw such testing as a way of protecting herds against high risk circumstances, particularly where no pre-movement test had been done. For example, when a farmer has moved a calf aged less than 42 days, or when a farmer neighbouring a bTB outbreak sells their cattle within the 28 day period. Participants in the Kendal area asked for this 28-day period to be reduced to minimise the risk of long-distance spread through the sale of high risk cattle.

There were some stakeholders in all areas who opposed compulsory post-movement testing. Some were concerned about the financial and practical burden this measure would have on farmers buying stock from the High Risk Area. Others questioned the efficacy of post-movement testing in preventing transmission between the reactor and the rest of the herd, arguing that this would be undermined unless a farmer isolated their newly purchased cattle - a measure that is not always practically feasible.

### **Routine cattle testing in the Low Risk Area**

Many stakeholders called for cattle in the Low Risk Area to be tested more frequently than once every four years, arguing that this was an important factor in maintaining the Low Risk Area's status by identifying outbreaks at the earliest possible opportunity.

Some participants felt strongly that increased surveillance in the Low Risk Area would help to identify and target 'traders'. A number of stakeholders identified a practice where farmers trade high numbers of cattle from the hotspot areas, capitalising on the low cost of these animals. Participants supported increased surveillance of Low Risk Area herds managed by farmers who regularly import stock from the High Risk Area, and called for a tighter definition of 'trader' as a way of identifying these farmers and subjecting them to this tighter surveillance. However, others noted that the financial gains of trading in low cost animals may still outweigh the costs of increased testing and surveillance.

### **Routine cattle testing in the High Risk Area**

There was less agreement among stakeholders considering testing measures in the High Risk Area. Those in the Low Risk Area supported reducing exemptions to pre-movement testing from high risk herds and some argued for this measure to be expanded to all cattle in the whole of the High Risk Area. These stakeholders were particularly concerned about the exemption of calves aged less than 42 days, and called for a ban on their movement, or the introduction of post-movement testing at 43 days. Many participants in the High Risk Area – farmers in particular – argued that any increased testing in the High Risk Area would be significantly undermined by the prevalence of bTB in the surrounding wildlife and as such, would have a limited impact on the eradication of the disease in their area.

High Risk Area participants were opposed to some of the specific measures for increased High Risk Area testing. One such proposal was to extend the time between short interval tests. High Risk Area participants felt this would increase the risk of cattle re-contracting the disease from both within the herd and from external infection in the wildlife. High Risk Area stakeholders also challenged the idea that the short interval test should not be used as a pre-movement test, as this would delay the time from which farmers recovering from a breakdown could move their cattle, prolonging their return to trading and business as usual.

### **Tuberculin skin test**

As outlined above, the value of testing was recognised but stakeholders across all risk areas raised concerns about the skin test. These concerns related to its reliability, the

impact of testing on farmers and vets, and the consistency of different vets' interpretations of the test. Stakeholders reiterated the need to consider the physical risks associated with a dangerous testing process, and the psychological stress of regular testing. To address concerns about handling, they suggested that Defra could offer grants to farmers so that they could install handling facilities that would make the current method of testing safer and easier. Another suggestion was to allow ways of testing other than the skin test. However, when proposals to increase the use of more rigorous tests such as the interferon-gamma assay test were discussed, stakeholders had concerns about the prospect of this leading to more false positives.

## Breakdown management and investigations

The draft Strategy proposes a number of measures for managing and investigating bTB breakdowns. Preferred measures include:

- Enhanced use of depopulation and controlled restocking of herds with on-going and recurring breakdowns in the HRA.
- Treating OTFS2 breakdowns as OTFW in the High Risk Area in order to address them more urgently.
- Improved epidemiological investigations in order to establish and address local and herd level risk factors in the High Risk Area and Edge Area, and measures to identify and address the causes of recurrent or persistent breakdowns.
- Additional surveillance around OTFW breakdowns in the Edge Area, including 6 month follow-up testing of clear herds, and check testing at severe OTFS breakdowns 6 and 12 months after restrictions are lifted.
- Additional testing around breakdowns in the Edge Area, including mandatory interferon-gamma assay parallel testing in new OTFW breakdowns and discretionary interferon-gamma assay testing in OTFS breakdowns.

More rigorous measures for breakdown management and investigation include:

- More intensive depopulation of breakdown herds and a prohibition on restocking until the establishment of a clear herd test.
- The removal of inconclusive reactors as reactors.
- Treating all herds in which reactor animals are found as OTFW in terms of breakdown management.

Stakeholders were keen to see improved epidemiological investigations following breakdowns and for this information to be disseminated locally. There was less support for stricter breakdown management measures (such as enhanced depopulation) and the proposals to widen the criteria for herds to be placed under these stricter measures. Stakeholders raised concerns about the potential negative impact of these measures on farmers, and questioned whether these stricter measures would be effective without more rigorous wildlife measures in place.

## **Epidemiological investigations**

There was widespread support for improved epidemiological investigation of each breakdown to establish approaches that address local and herd level risk factors more effectively. Many stakeholders spoke of the need for better and more effectively distributed information about localised risks, to allow farmers to take informed and timely action. Stakeholders questioned what resources were available to conduct these investigations and, crucially, whether it would be funded by government<sup>10</sup> or industry; some also suggested that AHVLA didn't have sufficient staff to take sole responsibility for this level of research. Some stakeholders emphasised that the investigations would need to be firmly focused on informing strategies for eradication and must not become an expensive layer of theoretical research. Others were interested in targeting investigations in areas where they would bring the most value, such as the Edge and High Risk Areas. East Sussex was suggested as an important area for research, as it is a small, isolated high risk pocket.

## **Depopulation and controlled restocking of herds**

Stakeholders generally opposed the enhanced use of depopulation due to concerns about its effectiveness, as well as its potential impact on individual farmers and on industry more widely. Several were concerned that depopulation of herds could put farmers out of business. Some stakeholders argued that the depopulation payment should be higher than the individual compensation rate in order to compensate for the history and breeding lines of a herd, and in recognition of the fact that the loss of an entire herd is more destructive than the loss of individual cattle. Some farming industry and veterinary stakeholders argued that it is unreasonable to force depopulation of cattle on farmers whilst preventing them from addressing the disease reservoir in badgers. Many agreed that depopulation should only occur in later phases of the eradication strategy, once the wildlife reservoir is under control, otherwise depopulation would simply be followed by re-infection of the herd.

One suggestion put forward was to link depopulation with biosecurity, for example by preventing farmers from re-populating until they have shown that their biosecurity measures are up to standard. However, this might be subject to the same objections that were made about linking biosecurity with compensation.

Participants also opposed the suggestion to prohibit restocking of herds until the establishment of a clear herd test, arguing that it would be unworkable for farmers to delay restocking for this long and remain economically viable. High Risk Area farmers expressed frustration with the suggestion that they should re-stock from low risk herds following depopulation, emphasising that while farmers want to buy low risk cows, these sell for a premium and many can't afford the cost.

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<sup>10</sup> In line with convention and style guidance, we use government, with lower case g. See: [http://www.ox.ac.uk/public\\_affairs/services\\_and\\_resources/style\\_guide/capitalisation.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/public_affairs/services_and_resources/style_guide/capitalisation.html)

## Lowering the threshold for breakdown management measures

Stakeholders expressed various reservations about the suggestion to treat the subset of herds that have had their 'Officially Bovine Tuberculosis Free' status suspended and are considered at greater epidemiological risk (OTFS 2 herds) in the same way as herds where the infection is confirmed (OFTW herds) - a preferred measure for both the High Risk Area and the Low Risk Area. Some stakeholders from the High Risk Area felt that the measure would be used to mandate more testing, adding to the already significant testing burden faced by farmers. These participants questioned the added benefits of such a regime when compared to the added restrictions and burden it would place on farmers. Some stakeholders from the Low Risk Area felt this measure was disproportionate for a Low Risk Area with a low rate of outbreak. It was suggested that only around 50% of OTFS2 outbreaks are later confirmed as OTFWs.

There were mixed views on the more rigorous measure to remove inconclusive reactors as reactors. Some participants felt that the measure could be positive, citing evidence that the presence of inconclusive reactors can be an early warning for conclusive results later on. Others argued that if the measure were introduced it should not be compulsory, as the implications for trade would be significant. Some participants questioned the usefulness of the measure, arguing that there are very few inconclusive reactors.

## Wildlife surveillance and control

The draft Strategy includes a number of measures to enhance the surveillance and control of the wildlife population. Defra proposes a different approach for each risk area, as follows:

- The preferred approach for the Low Risk Area does not contain any measures to address the wildlife population.
- Within the Edge Area, Defra have decided to deploy measures to encourage local badger vaccination initiatives (such as the Badger Vaccination Fund) as well as introducing targeted, risk-based surveillance for *M.bovis* in badgers.
- Within the High Risk Area, the wider roll out of badger culling, subject to successful pilots, and the deployment of an oral badger vaccine when available is the preferred approach.

Stakeholders agreed that wildlife control measures play an important part in the Strategy to eradicate bTB, and that more work should be done to understand the distribution of the disease in badgers. However, views on which measures to use were polarised, with farming industry and vet stakeholders supporting the wider roll out of a cull whilst wildlife groups called for greater focus on the wider deployment of a badger vaccination programme.

## Badger surveillance

Participants felt that currently there is little understanding about the infection status of badgers and the role that badgers play in the spread of infection to cattle. There were calls for better surveillance of badgers across the High Risk and Edge Areas, and the routine testing of road kill was suggested as an affordable way for Defra to introduce this. A number of stakeholders were critical of the government's decision not to conduct post-mortem examinations on the badgers culled during the pilots. This argument was made largely on the basis that findings from these investigations would help to increase transparency and could be used to improve public understanding and support of these measures.

## Culling

Farming industry stakeholders, particularly in the High Risk Area workshops, supported the wider roll out of badger culling, which is a preferred option for the High Risk Area.

*“The faster they can roll it out the better and the bigger the area the better.”* (Farmer, High Risk Area)

Those supporting this measure saw it as a crucial component of the bTB Eradication Strategy, without which the effectiveness of all other measures would be compromised. Many thought that the pilot culls had been overly bureaucratic and argued that any roll out needed to be simpler, with a more straightforward licensing process. There were some calls across all risk areas for government to lift the Protection of Badgers Act; however others cautioned that doing so could result in increased incidence of badger baiting. They felt too that methods other than shooting should be explored, such as gassing, which might allow better targeting of badger setts and bring down the cost of culling.

However, there were stakeholders in all risk areas – predominantly those from wildlife groups - who argued that the evidence in support of the cull was lacking and that other measures were both more effective and more ethical. They contended that evidence regarding badger culling had been misinterpreted by Defra and that badger culling would not reduce the disease incidence in cattle to the extent stated by Defra, due to perturbation. Some also felt that wider roll out of badger culling (subject to the results of the pilot cull) would employ a different methodology and management process to that used during the Randomised Badger Culling Trial and that there was, therefore, no guarantee that the impact on bTB incidence in cattle would be the same. Others objected to culling on ethical grounds - stating that it is wrong to kill wildlife and suggesting that the welfare of badgers was not given enough consideration in the Strategy.

If badger culling were to be rolled out, some stakeholders said that the selection of cull zones needed to be done in a more considered way and informed by research and surveillance, though they did recognise that however well selection was done, culls would be subject to political and public opposition. Some participants at the Plumpton workshop in East Sussex thought that culling should be introduced in the south east of England, arguing that its unique positioning as an isolated pocket of bTB outbreak made the area



ideal for intensive and targeted interventions such as culling. Additionally, a number of participants thought that it would be suitable to cull within the Edge Areas where badger-related spread from the High Risk Area is most likely.

## **Badger vaccination**

Wider deployment of the injectable badger vaccine was supported by wildlife groups. Some thought that the potential for the vaccination to have a significant impact on bTB incidence was being underplayed in the Strategy and that targeted use of the vaccine, particularly in the Edge Area using evidence from badger surveillance, could create a barrier against disease spread.

Badger vaccination was supported by other participants, including some from the farming industry, but there was scepticism about the usefulness of deploying injectable badger vaccination initiatives more widely, due to the widespread nature of the disease in both badgers and cattle. Farmers and vets highlighted the practical challenges and costs of administering the vaccine, relative to the impact they felt this would have on reducing the incidences of bTB in the cattle population. However, one benefit of deploying injectable vaccines noted by farming industry stakeholders was that it would allow those who oppose the culling of badgers to address the wildlife reservoir in a way that they felt was ethical and humane, which may in turn bring greater public support for the Strategy.

There was a strong consensus that an oral badger vaccine would be an important tool to tackle the disease in the wildlife, but until this measure is fully developed it was not considered useful to discuss its implementation in any great detail.

## **Surveillance of non-bovine farmed animals**

The draft Strategy does not propose additional surveillance arrangements of non-bovine farmed animals as a preferred measure for the Low, Edge and High Risk Areas. However, the additional surveillance in South American Camelids is a possible more rigorous option for stakeholders to consider in the Low Risk and Edge Areas.

Some stakeholders felt that non-bovine farmed animals had not received sufficient attention in the Strategy and called for increased testing and surveillance of South American camelids (SACs) and other non-bovine species.

Few stakeholders raised the issue of monitoring and preventing the spread of bTB in non-bovine farmed animals. Those who did address this issue expressed strong support for the additional surveillance in SACs in both the Edge and Low Risk Areas. Some participants felt that SAC farmers should be under more government control, and require movement licenses in the same way as cattle farmers. Additional surveillance was also seen as important as the skin test is ineffective on these animals and blood testing requires more resource.



Participants discussed a number of other non-bovine species and some suggested that the risks posed to and by them have been overlooked. Deer, sheep, and goats were all mentioned as species susceptible to the disease. Some stakeholders felt that these species warranted greater attention in the Strategy and should also be required to have movement licences. There were calls for pre-emptive moves to bring these animals under legislation now, so that if they are linked to outbreaks in the future they can be dealt with swiftly.

In addition to increased surveillance, some stakeholders thought that non-bovine farmed animals should be subject to measures of routine testing and compensation payments for those animal testing positive, as is done for cattle.

## Local eradication strategies

The draft Strategy includes proposals to introduce local eradication strategies to the High Risk Area, developed from the findings of AHVLA field epidemiological teams.

There was strong support for the proposal to introduce local eradication strategies to the High Risk Area. Stakeholders recognised that the High Risk Area is characterised by variances in the prevalence of the disease and in disease epidemiology. Local eradication strategies were therefore seen as a common sense approach to disease management by stakeholders keen not to *“treat it as a blanket approach”* but for control strategies to be tailored to each area. An example, noted previously, is the high risk pocket of bTB in the area of East Sussex. Stakeholders requested that this area is singled out for initiatives not open to the rest of the High Risk Area, for example by using it as a site for badger culling, or a test site for future vaccination programmes and other new initiatives.

Stakeholders saw this measure as inseparable from the proposals to improve epidemiological investigations following herd breakdowns and the improved surveillance of wildlife.

This measure focuses on tailoring local strategies based on local epidemiology. Stakeholders also discussed the merits and practical implications of creating local eradication boards. This concept is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 on Governance, Delivery and Funding.

## Slaughterhouse surveillance

Several preferred measures for implementation in the Low Risk and Edge Areas involve slaughterhouses and Approved Finishing Units (AFUs). One measure, which the government has already decided to deploy in the Low Risk Area, involves employing stricter biosecurity conditions for AFUs that introduce large numbers of cattle from the HRA. Another preferred option for both the Low Risk and Edge Areas is to enhance slaughterhouse surveillance by monitoring slaughterhouse

performance, including providing extra training for Food Standards Agency meat inspectors to raise awareness and ability to recognise bTB lesions. Additionally, a more rigorous option for the Edge Area is to ban AFUs altogether, in order to reduce the number of cattle brought in from the HRA.

There was widespread support among participants for enhanced slaughterhouse surveillance and closer monitoring of slaughterhouse performance. Suggestions for improvement included increased testing and the introduction of slaughterhouse performance ratings. Views were more mixed on proposals to employ stricter biosecurity conditions on Approved Finishing Units.

Many participants emphasised the importance of the role played by slaughterhouses in identifying cases of bTB, but expressed a lack of trust in slaughterhouses to accurately carry out this function. For example, one participant noted that *“there is too much scope to miss things when convenient”*, while another person thought that *“abattoirs are basically just always looking to cut costs”*. Some stakeholders noted discrepancies in the number of identified bTB cases between slaughterhouses, and there were calls for Defra to scrutinise these figures in more detail.

Stakeholders made various suggestions about how slaughterhouse surveillance could be improved. Some participants felt that slaughterhouses should be rated on their performance and ratings published in order to increase transparency. Others felt that the number of spot checks should be increased, and for non-compliant abattoirs to be penalised. Some argued that DNA tests should be used to ensure that test results were linked with the correct animal. There was also a suggestion that Defra could highlight examples of good practice to restore consumer confidence in the food industry, especially following recent high profile food scares (e.g. horsemeat in the supply chain). There was particular support for providing additional training and accreditation to slaughterhouse inspectors, to help them to more accurately and consistently identify cases of bTB.

Stakeholder views on the measure to introduce stricter biosecurity conditions in Approved Finishing Units<sup>11</sup> (AFUs) were more varied. Many stakeholders supported the measure, especially if the intention is to rely increasingly on abattoir testing for the identification of reactors. However, others felt that that AFUs do not pose a significant risk; that they already have strict biosecurity measures in place; and that efforts should be concentrated on cattle that are intended to be kept alive. Some participants made a distinction between the two types of Approved Finishing Units (indoor and outdoor). There was a suggestion that these two types of AFUs should be addressed differently, and that outside AFUs should be subject to stricter biosecurity measures than the former.

The more rigorous option to ban AFUs in the Edge Area was discussed by a small number of stakeholders. Again, a distinction was made between indoor and outdoor AFUs. Several participants supported the use of bio-secure AFUs in the Edge Area, but thought that

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<sup>11</sup> An Approved Finishing Unit is a biosecure unit used to channel cattle from bTB restricted herds to slaughter

grazing AFUs in the Edge Area should be banned until better information can be provided about the potential risk of transmission.

## Conclusion

This chapter has outlined some of the key issues raised relating to potential control measures, as outlined by Defra in the draft Strategy.

The introduction of voluntary risk-based trading was seen as a good way of providing more information for farmers buying cattle and encouraging farmers to avoid risky practices. The negative implications for certain kinds of farmers were raised as a significant concern - particularly by participants in the High Risk Area. Concerns were also raised regarding proposals to link compensation to biosecurity, along with doubts that on-farm biosecurity measures were sufficient to protect against bTB infection and the perceived difficulty of defining and measuring good biosecurity.

The introduction of greater wildlife surveillance and control was widely supported by farming and industry stakeholders who called for the wider roll out of the badger culls subject to successful pilots. Participants from wildlife groups opposed the culls, supporting instead alternative methods of wildlife control, such as the injectable vaccine and more focus on cattle control measures.

Stakeholders agreed on the need for better surveillance of bTB in badgers. They felt there was currently little understanding about the infection status of badgers and the role that badgers play in the spread of infection to cattle.

Measures to increase the level of cattle testing and surveillance provoked mixed reactions. Generally there was support for more testing within the Low Risk Area, through both routine and post-movement testing. However, more frequent testing in the High Risk Area was considered to be more problematic, as stakeholders questioned the efficacy of this approach and the impact measures would have on farmers and the viability of their farms. Where discussed, stakeholders supported the increased surveillance of South American camelids, and called for these animals to be licensed and monitored as cattle are.

Stakeholders had a strong desire to understand more about the cause of bTB breakdowns, therefore improving epidemiological investigations was considered a priority, as was enhancing the quality of testing at slaughterhouses through improved slaughterhouse surveillance. A number of stakeholders were concerned about proposals to introduce more rigorous breakdown management because of the negative implication for farmers and their ability to resume business following herd breakdown.

# Chapter 3 Governance, delivery and funding

## Introduction

This chapter reports on stakeholders' views on Defra's proposals for greater partnership working and cost-sharing and its future delivery and funding options.

Defra's proposals on governance, delivery and funding are based on the concepts of increased partnership working and a fairer sharing of costs amongst stakeholders. This draws on experience from other countries which have been successful in dealing with bTB. The most notable example comes from New Zealand, where an industry-led body has ownership of the national bTB control programme, and a network of local committees supports the delivery of the control programme.

This chapter reports on participant views on governance, delivery and funding under the following headings:

- Governance
  - Partnership working
  - Responsibility for funding bTB controls
  - Conditions for greater cost-sharing
  - The principle of increased localism
  - How might local bTB boards look in practice
- Delivery and funding
  - Greater use of lay testers
  - Developing insurance options
  - Establishment of a mutual bTB control fund
  - Government reducing its intervention in the market

## Overview

Defra's proposal for greater partnership working received support from many stakeholders. This was seen as an effective way of removing bTB control from political influence - considered particularly important given the long timescale of the Strategy. Some were wary, however, that the proposal for greater partnership working was actually stakeholders being asked to pay more for bTB controls without the guarantee of greater influence. Others said that they would want greater transparency from Defra regarding how bTB funding is currently spent before they would consider entering into a partnership arrangement.

The proposal to establish a mutual bTB control fund prompted many questions from stakeholders about how this would work in practice. Whilst there was some outright

opposition to stakeholders contributing more to control bTB, there was also conditional support from some stakeholders as long as those who were paying were given a say over how that money was spent.

Stakeholders from all workshops were positive about the idea of local eradication boards as a way of tailoring bTB control programmes and giving ownership to local stakeholders. Many participants provided suggestions for how these boards might look in practice and the role they could play. Some felt that local boards might not be given the power to make decisions at a local level or to feed up to national policy.

Participants had fewer comments on Defra's future options for funding and delivery. However, the proposal to increase the use of lay testers was challenged particularly by veterinary stakeholders, who felt that this would jeopardise the quality of the testing process and therefore not be cost-effective in the long term.

## Governance

### Partnership working

Partnership working was interpreted by most stakeholders as greater industry control, although some saw wildlife groups also playing a useful role in strategic decision-making. Whilst partnership working was welcomed by many, there was a degree of mistrust that a partnership offer would in reality amount to anything more than stakeholders paying a greater share of costs.

Defra's draft Strategy describes the need for more and improved partnership working between government, industry and other stakeholders. Participants from the farming and veterinary sectors tended to interpret this as meaning more control by industry and saw many benefits to this. The benefits included faster and more cost effective deployment of measures, and a way of reducing government influence, including mitigating the impacts that a change of Government would have on the direction of the Strategy.

Stakeholders discussed the role of the wildlife groups and whether they should be considered part of the 'partnership' working to eradicate bTB. There was some disagreement over this point. Overall the input of wildlife groups was welcomed, provided they were willing to contribute financially towards the programme. The role played by wildlife organisations in deploying and funding badger vaccination programmes was acknowledged and welcomed. Many thought their engagement was essential to maintaining public and political acceptability of the Strategy. However, some participants challenged the value that wildlife groups would bring to the Strategy as a whole, given that they are largely concerned with one element - addressing bTB in the badger population.

Although stakeholders recognised the need for greater partnership working, most were hesitant to commit to something which they felt was currently open to interpretation. More industry control of the bTB programme was certainly an attractive idea for many. However, they felt that this control would have strings attached – in particular, a requirement for stakeholders to pay more towards bTB controls.

Those opposing giving more control to industry voiced concerns that industry could become a scapegoat for failure. Some felt that it was wholly inappropriate for industry to take a lead on the disease management while bTB is at current levels. Others worried that an absence of public support for farmers could derail the efforts of local eradication groups. Stakeholders felt that the public would oppose handing farmers any greater control over the deployment of measures, especially measures to control wildlife.

The most sceptical among the participants were wary that 'greater partnership working' actually referred to stakeholders paying more for bTB controls *without* having any greater say in how the programme was run. This mistrust stemmed partly from the relatively high-level proposals made by Defra in their draft Strategy relating to partnership working; particularly in comparison to the detailed set of proposed options for the control measures in each risk area. Some interpreted this lack of detail as a way of hiding unpalatable proposals that the farming industry must pay more for bTB control.

## **Responsibility for funding bTB controls**

Stakeholders were on the whole opposed to paying more towards bTB controls. Arguments included that bTB is a public health issue and should therefore be funded by government, that government was responsible for the current high levels of bTB, having failed to tackle the disease over previous years and therefore should pay for bringing it back to a manageable level, and that individual farmers could not afford to contribute more to bTB controls at this time.

Sharing the costs of the bTB programme more fairly is a main theme in Defra's draft Strategy. In general, stakeholders interpreted this as meaning that industry would be expected to pay more towards bTB control and government to pay less. Based on this understanding, many stakeholders expressed outright opposition to this proposal, emphasising that bTB is a public health issue, as well as an issue affecting food supplies and prices and therefore entirely appropriate for public funding. Some suggested that the programme should be funded independently from Defra's budget and allocated centrally from the Treasury.

Many stakeholders argued that government is responsible for the scale of the outbreak over the past 20 years because they had failed to address it in its early stages and allowed it to develop to its current levels. Some participants felt that an absence of robust policies addressing bTB and the introduction of the Badger Protection Act had contributed to the high level of bTB in England today. It was therefore considered unacceptable for industry, rather than government, to fund measures to control the disease while it is at peak levels. Some stakeholders conceded that they would be willing to pay more towards the Strategy once the disease outbreaks had returned to more 'manageable' levels.

The financial burden of bTB on farmers, especially those residing in the High Risk Areas, was cited as a key reason why industry should not be asked to contribute further to the programme. Some argued that these farmers simply cannot afford to contribute more, and that doing so would render individual farming businesses unviable, and could also impact the viability of the farming industry more widely.

Others saw the increased financial burden on industry as inevitable and greater industry control as the 'sweetener' offered by Defra. A number of participants were concerned that they would not be given a choice in the matter, and asked Defra to clarify whether stakeholders were being *asked* if they would be willing to pay more towards bTB controls, or *told* they will be paying more for bTB controls.

## **Conditions for greater cost-sharing**

Recognising that stakeholders may have to pay more in a context of Defra's reduced budget, some stakeholders stipulated more detailed conditions about what would be required from government if industry was to contribute more to the bTB eradication programme. Stakeholders were willing to contribute more if they were convinced that the money was being used effectively and efficiently, and they suggested that greater transparency about how Defra spends the bTB eradication programme budget would help to build this trust. Some people were critical of the amount currently spent on administration, for example the AHVLA.

Another condition was for industry to have more input into which areas of the bTB eradication programme they would fund. Areas where farmers might be more willing to contribute include: badger culling, routine and post-movement testing and research and development (although only in certain research areas). Areas where it was felt that industry would not be willing to pay included the deployment of the injectable badger vaccination, and research and development of badger vaccines.

Stakeholders also called for more evidence that the Strategy is being implemented at the required scale and pace, as well as confirmation that it is working and making progress towards the goal of bTB eradication.

Stakeholders felt strongly that there were others with vested interests in the eradication of bTB who should be contributing more towards the costs of the programme. It was recognised that wildlife groups are already contributing towards some of the costs and this was widely welcomed and encouraged. Supermarkets were frequently cited as groups who should be required to pay more. Some questioned whether more costs could be transferred to consumers, for example through a tax on beef, and an argument was made that consumer costs need to be linked more clearly to the cost of production.

## **The principle of increased localism**

Stakeholders generally welcomed proposals to increase local control and reduce the amount of top down governance of the eradication programme.

Stakeholders were asked to consider the pros and cons of increased local control over the implementation of the eradication Strategy. Local committees or boards were seen as vehicles through which those on the ground could influence policy, allowing farmers to feel more engaged and that they had the capacity to effect change. More local involvement and control for farmers and other stakeholders was seen as a way of encouraging a more proactive approach to addressing the disease. Local boards were seen as a forum in

which the practicalities of government's policies could be assessed on the ground and for bringing to light any unforeseen implications for farmers. The boards could also create a degree of independence between the Strategy and government, as one participant argued: *"If a government changes, this group will still be there so the groundwork they have laid down can be continued and built upon."*

Some thought that local boards would improve cooperation and partnership working between industry and government, providing an opportunity for government to rebuild trust with the farming community. Local boards were also seen as an opportunity to use the local knowledge and expertise of people on the ground, leading to more effective tailored local strategies and the promotion of a culture of local collaboration and mutual learning within the industry. The effective dissemination of information and guidance would encourage good practice within local areas, and some suggested that boards could go further to become accountable for the practices in their area by managing local enforcement officials and monitoring testing.

Despite the support for local boards in principle, stakeholders identified a number of key challenges to be considered when implementing a model of increased localism. There was concern that local boards would act as an additional layer of decision making and administration that may result in delays in deploying bTB measures. If stakeholders holding radically opposing views, for example farmers and wildlife groups, were on the same boards, then it would be more likely that discussions would result in a 'stalemate'. Some participants raised the potential for conflicts of interests between different local area boards. Getting different regions to work together while the disease is so regionally concentrated could be a challenge, as measures that increase the likelihood of disease eradication in one area, may negatively impact on another. A lack of co-operation could result in divisions within the eradication Strategy as a whole.

Stakeholders also foresaw challenges in identifying the right people with the time, qualities and skills to sit on the boards. There is a danger that boards could attract members with the strongest views, who are not necessarily representative of their communities. The capacity of industry to raise the funding required for the infrastructure, set up and running costs of this governance model was also a concern.

## **How might local bTB boards look in practice?**

Stakeholders felt that local bTB boards should be formed at county level and consist of a range of stakeholder groups.

While many stakeholders strongly supported the notion of increased localism, their support came with a number of conditions that would be required from government to enable the success of the model. These included:

- Measures to support and encourage farmers into leadership roles, including compensating members of local eradication boards for their time, were thought to be both appropriate and necessary to get the right quality of candidates.



- A clear definition of roles, responsibilities and powers of local boards. There were calls for boards to be afforded real power and influence, with clear structures in place for local boards to feed into national boards. Stakeholders reiterated that farmers would be unwilling to sign up to this model unless they agreed with the package of measures being deployed.
- Changes in delivery structures to better align with the practices of the local boards by introducing a more localised AHVLA, rather than regional equivalent, for example.
- Assurances that once boards are installed they will stay in place through changes in government and that decisions coming out of boards will be free from political influence
- The establishment of local boards as soon as possible, so as to not cause undue delays in the deployment of the Eradication Strategy.

When discussing the geographical size of local boards there was agreement that a balance needs to be struck between boards being equipped to respond to local need and being able to address bTB outbreak at scale. Generally, it was felt that boards should be formed at the county level, although some suggested a more flexible approach, such as being able to work at regional level in bTB-free areas and at the parish level in ‘hotspot areas’.

The composition of local boards was considered to be a key determinant of their success and overwhelmingly participants agreed that a mix of local stakeholder voices would need to be represented. Suggested stakeholders who should input into local strategies included: farmers (from all sectors), vets, Local Authority representatives, Trading Standards representatives, livestock auctioneers, and epidemiological experts.

There was some disagreement over the presence of wildlife groups on the boards. Wildlife groups were keen to be represented, and other stakeholders argued that local boards must have representation from wildlife groups in order to be publically accepted, and because these groups could also offer “*a real understanding of badger ecology*”. Others disagreed, arguing that wildlife groups could not meaningfully contribute to practical strategies to eradicate the disease. Sometimes views of who should be on local boards depended on whether they should be required to contribute funding or not - attitudes towards the inclusion of wildlife groups on boards tended to change if it meant more money for the local eradication programme.

When discussing how stakeholders could be appointed to local leadership posts, there was widespread agreement that a democratically elected membership would be the best way to ensure that farmers’ views were represented. However, others pointed out that some external input into the process may be necessary to ensure a mix of stakeholders.

Some ideas were put forward suggesting the kinds of activities that local boards might undertake. These included: the monitoring and tracking of cattle movements and herd breakdowns, organising delivery partners in bTB testing, keeping up to date with policy and research and disseminating good practice and guidance, and raising awareness of the consequences of bTB to the public and consumers.

## Delivery and funding

The stakeholders were asked for their views on a number of potential future options for funding and delivery, including the greater use of lay testers; the potential for an insurance scheme; the establishment of a mutual bTB fund; and the potential for government to reduce its intervention in the market.

### Greater use of lay testers

The proposals for government to increase the use of lay testers were met with mixed reactions from the stakeholders. A small number thought that lay testers could be a good idea, pointing out that testing is a relatively low-skilled task to ask vets to carry out, and that lay testers could be an effective way to improve efficiency and help reduce costs. There was also more general support for allowing farmers greater choice and control over who carried out their tests and the timing of them, especially if farmers are being asked to pay for testing in the future.

However, most stakeholders felt strongly that vets were preferable to lay testers for several reasons. The most frequently cited was the importance of accurate and consistent testing: stakeholders were concerned that standards of practice would be lower among lay testers than among vets. The added value brought by using local vets was also widely acknowledged including: the professional and personal relationships and continuity between farmers and vets; a vet's local knowledge and expertise of disease risk; and their familiarity with individual farms, allowing them to tailor advice and guidance appropriately.

If the use of lay testers was increased, stakeholders suggested the introduction of a *partnership agreement between vets and lay testers*, with lay staff operating under the control and name of a local veterinary practice. This was seen as a way of increasing lay testers' accountability and ensuring professional support was at hand. It was thought too that this structure would help to maintain the financial viability of rural veterinary practices in the face of growing competition between practices should testing be put out to competitive tender.

There was strong agreement that any use of lay testers must come with a reassurance that AHVLA will regulate their practices and monitor quality standards. Some saw value in external regulation and policing of the procedures around testing, whether the testing was carried out by lay testers or professional vets.

### Developing insurance options

Some stakeholders discussed the merits and disadvantages of introducing an insurance-type scheme as a future funding option. An insurance model was generally perceived to be a good idea in principle, as a way to cut compensation costs for government, whilst maintaining a safety net for farmers during a herd breakdown.

For a number of reasons, stakeholders did not think that an insurance scheme was a feasible option now or in the near future. The main reason was that, with bTB at current

epidemic levels, there would be no financial incentive for insurance providers. Even if a scheme was introduced, stakeholders felt there was a danger that some farmers would be excluded, namely those from the hot spot areas, who would be rendered 'uninsurable' due to current or past bTB breakdowns. Even if guaranteed coverage, stakeholders argued that farmers from the hotspot areas would still be subject to unaffordable premiums.

Stakeholders felt that an insurance scheme would be more viable if:

- There was Government backing, including co-funding, to make this an attractive venture for a private provider and to enable every farmer to be guaranteed coverage.
- The scheme was introduced once the disease has been brought down to more manageable levels so premiums are affordable for all farmers.
- More is understood about transmission routes of the disease to enable bTB risk to be accurately monetised.

### **Establishment of a mutual bTB control fund**

There was support among stakeholders for the establishment of a mutual bTB control fund, although the proposal provoked more questions than answers, including: would payment into the fund be compulsory or voluntary? How would the level of individual contribution be determined? Who would have control over spending the money?

Stakeholders agreed that for a fund to be successful, as many people as possible would need to pay in to it. Some thought that a mutual fund would need to be supported by a 100% take-up rate and enforced by a compulsory levy, while others suggested it could be a voluntary scheme, whereby those who pay in would be entitled to a higher rate of compensation.

There was wide agreement that affected farmers should not be the only contributors to the fund and that costs should be spread out across the risk areas. Stakeholders in the Low Risk Area did not appear to be any more negative about the idea of contributing to a mutual scheme than those in the High Risk Area, and displayed a sense of shared responsibility over the future of the disease, as exemplified by the reflections of one low risk participant:

*"We are lucky to live in a Low Risk Area, perhaps we should contribute to hold the disease back?"* (Low Risk)

Determining how much each farmer should contribute was identified as a particular challenge and a number of different ideas were put forward about what a fair division of contributions might look like. One suggestion was to have a variable levy rate determined by region or individual herd risk so that farmers in the Low Risk Area are not required to contribute on an equal basis to those in the High Risk Area. Others argued that as farmers in the Low Risk Area save on testing they should contribute more, followed by the Edge Area and then the High Risk Area, so that costs are levelled out across the industry. In addition to the contributions from cattle farmers and government, it was seen as vital for

other parties to contribute to the bTB mutual fund too, including wildlife trusts and supermarkets.

A number of stakeholders opposed the introduction of a fund at present, arguing that it would be more appropriate to wait until the disease spread is controlled and contained. Some of these stakeholders thought that it was unrealistic to expect industry to build a war chest of funding while the disease is at peak, while others were concerned that costs would spiral and agreeing to a mutual fund at this stage would be akin to writing a blank cheque.

Overall, stakeholders felt that farmers would only be willing to pay into the fund if they had a real voice in how the money was spent. Critically, farmers would be willing to fund certain measures, but not others. For example, stakeholders agreed that wildlife groups, rather than industry stakeholders, should contribute towards the deployment of an injectable badger vaccine.

### **Government reducing its intervention in the market**

Stakeholders raised concerns that current compensation levels were not reflective of market value and argued that any reduction in compensation payments should be paired with greater control for farmers over sale and disposal of their reactors.

The proposal for government to reduce its intervention in the market by lowering compensation and increasing the uptake of private reactor removal provoked general discussions around the levels of compensation paid to farmers under the current system. Many stakeholders argued that currently farmers are not compensated adequately for their loss, particularly pedigree and breeding cattle and that reducing compensation further would simply exacerbate existing unfairness in the system. They called for a fairer system of compensation that reflected true market value more accurately and included consequential losses beyond the animal itself.

Others supported a model of compensation whereby the farmer receives a percentage of the market value, variable on the type of the animal and the risk to the trader. However, questions were raised as to how Defra would judge whether a farmer had met the requirements for obtaining a full payment, and how this policy could be implemented fairly and objectively. In general, it was felt that compensation needed to maintain a balance and should not be made so high as to incentivise farmers to falsify bTB tests.

If compensation payments were reduced, stakeholders felt it was important for farmers to have more control over the sale of their reactors, and the freedom to choose disposal of reactors either by private slaughterhouses, or through government arranged disposal. They identified a number of inefficiencies in the current system of reactor removal, including the slow removal of reactors and the lengthy distances that reactors have to travel to slaughter. Some felt that the government secured poor prices for carcasses, and welcomed proposals for letting farmers negotiate their own carcass values, though not all agreed that farmers would be able to secure higher prices.

Some stakeholders identified potential negative impacts to this proposal. These included certain animals being excluded from the private reactor market, as abattoirs may only be willing to buy good quality cattle. Others noted the significant transport costs of sending a reactor over long distances, and queried how much farmers or slaughterhouses would be willing to pay for this.

## Communicating the Strategy

One of the major crosscutting themes to emerge from all the workshops was the need for better public awareness of bTB. Stakeholders expressed a strong desire for Defra to improve their outward communication of the Strategy, including information on the extent of the bTB problem and the implications for the livestock industry, the taxpayer and society more widely.

Across all risk areas, some stakeholders argued that the negative public view of badger culling was a consequence of poor communication and information: these stakeholders felt that a communication and education strategy was an essential counterpart to the measures outlined in the draft Strategy. Stakeholders felt that public information should include a clear explanation of the rationale behind the wildlife controls, and provide an evidence-based account of badgers' role in the spread of bTB. Farmers and industry stakeholders thought that an evidenced-based case would result in stronger public support for wildlife controls, and this was seen as instrumental in any future policy gains in this area. Conversely, stakeholders representing wildlife groups felt that evidence would in fact result in less support for the culls. Overall, stakeholders thought it was important for Defra to 'humanise' the Strategy, by communicating the financial and psychological impact of bTB on farmers and other professionals associated with its control.

There was some disagreement over who would be best placed to deliver this message. Some felt that it would be better communicated by industry, rather than Defra, Others disagreed, citing the lack of trust between public and industry.<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has described the stakeholder views on Defra's proposals for greater partnership working and cost sharing, new governance models, and future options for funding the bTB Strategy.

There was widespread welcome for increased partnership working and general support for industry having greater control over the deployment of the bTB eradication programme. Although participants recognised that greater partnership working would come with greater costs, stakeholders strongly opposed contributing more financially to the Strategy at this time, when they have limited influence over the choice of measures deployed. For many, an increased financial contribution from industry was seen as conditional upon keeping the politics out of bTB eradication strategies and practice and giving industry a far greater

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<sup>12</sup> Please refer to the report on the Public Dialogue for some more guidance on communicating the draft Strategy.

voice in the development and delivery of control measures. A mutual bTB fund was supported as a potential method for emphasising this shared decision-making power.

Stakeholders discussed new models of governance, specifically the use of increased localism by using local eradication boards to provide a relationship between local implementation and the national programme for eradication. Stakeholders saw a number of advantages to this model and welcomed the increased influence afforded to those who are best placed to understand the disease, i.e. the farmers, vets and other professionals that deal with the disease on the ground. They stipulated a number of conditions that would need to be in place to ensure their success, most importantly the boards would need to be afforded with 'real' power and influence over implementation in their area, and remain free from political influence. Stakeholders also raised concern about the extra resource required to administer and sit on the local boards.

Stakeholders considered some potential options for funding the bTB programme in the future. The establishment of a mutual bTB fund was the most popular proposal among those who recognised the need for any additional cost burden to be shared between all areas of industry, as well as wildlife groups and supermarkets. Farming industry stakeholders dismissed the proposal to develop an insurance scheme as an alternative to compensation, saying that this proposal would only be viable once the spread of bTB has been controlled and contained. The least support was shown for proposals for government to reduce its intervention in the market of reactor removal and disposal by lowering compensation. Many stakeholders were concerned at the prospect of reduced levels of compensation, while others valued the increased choice and control this would afford farmers over the removal of their animals.

Finally, stakeholders felt that the public should be made more aware of bTB and that Defra should improve its communication of the Strategy, including information on the extent of the bTB problem and the implications for the livestock industry, the taxpayer and society more widely.

# Chapter 4 Conclusions

## Introduction

In this final chapter we summarise the main messages that emerged from stakeholder deliberations on the proposals in Defra's draft Strategy and reflect on the dialogue objectives.

## Main messages from the stakeholder workshops

The main messages that stakeholders felt should inform the future development of the Strategy are summarised below under the following three headings:

- Control measures
- Governance, delivery and funding
- Communicating information about bTB

### Control measures

- Voluntary risk-based trading was seen as an effective way to provide more information to farmers when buying cattle.
- Stakeholders supported encouraging good biosecurity practices amongst 'problem farmers', but many felt that linking compensation to biosecurity was not a suitable method for achieving this.
- There was support for more localised strategies, informed by improved epidemiological investigations following identification of bTB infection in a herd.
- There was widespread support among participants for enhanced slaughterhouse surveillance and closer monitoring of slaughterhouse performance and increased herd testing in the Low Risk Area.
- Some stakeholders felt that a stricter cattle control regime in the High Risk Area would be undermined by the prevalence of bTB in local wildlife, posing a threat of badger-to-cattle transmission.
- Stakeholders agreed that wildlife control measures play an important part in the Strategy to eradicate bTB, but opinions differed on the most appropriate approach.
- Farming industry and vet stakeholders saw the wider roll out of a cull as a pivotal part of the Strategy's success.
- Wildlife groups opposed badger culling, contending that it would not reduce the disease incidence in cattle to the extent stated by Defra.
- Stakeholders called for better surveillance of bTB in badgers. They felt there was currently little understanding about the infection status of badgers and the role that badgers play in the spread of infection to cattle.

- Badger vaccination was supported in principle but there was scepticism from some stakeholders about the costs of administering the vaccine relative to the impact on reducing bTB incidence in the cattle population.

## **Governance and funding**

- Increased partnership working was interpreted by many as giving farmers and the farming industry more influence and decision-making power over the bTB control programme. Most stakeholder participants were supportive of this.
- There were differences of opinion amongst stakeholders about the extent to which wildlife organisations should be involved in the delivery of the Strategy as a whole.
- Some stakeholders supported more cost-sharing only on the condition that increased financial contributions go hand-in-hand with more influence and control over the strategic and practical aspects of the programme.
- Stakeholders were broadly supportive of the introduction of local eradication boards, but questions remained over the geographic scale at which the local eradication boards would operate, who should sit on them and their level of influence over local and national bTB policy and implementation.

## **Communicating information about bTB**

- Many stakeholders felt more effective public communication of accurate information about bTB and its controls was necessary. They thought that the public should be made more aware of the extent of the bTB problem and its implications for the livestock industry, the taxpayer and society more widely.
- Stakeholders, particularly farmers, thought it was important for Defra to ‘humanise’ the Strategy, by communicating the work done by farmers to control bTB and the financial and psychological impact of bTB on farmers and other professionals associated with its control. Farmers at the workshops expressed frustration that, as they saw it, the public were not being given all of the information that they needed to understand the issue.

## **Reflection on the objectives**

In this final section we look broadly at the objectives of the stakeholder engagement strand of this project. These are:

- To hear and understand stakeholder views on Defra’s draft Strategy for Achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis-Free (OTF) Status for England published on 4 July 2013.
- To enable participants to discuss the draft Strategy with a range of stakeholders, providing them with an opportunity to hear other perspectives.
- To explore the differences in views and the potential for consensus regarding the best measures to achieve OTF status for England.
- To provide additional qualitative data to complement formal consultation submissions.

Some of these objectives are about the value and success of the engagement process and the way in which this report captures the views of participants. That is, the extent to which the dialogue has enabled different stakeholder groups to discuss the draft Strategy and hear perspectives other than their own, and to explore opportunities for consensus



about how best to achieve OTF status for England. Others are concerned with the way in which the findings contained in this report are used by policy-makers to inform the development of the draft Strategy by complementing submissions to the formal consultation.

It is not our role and nor are we in a position to make an assessment of whether or not the stakeholder engagement met or will meet these objectives. The process in which stakeholders were involved is clearly central to the project but it is not the only factor in its overall success. However, we can reflect briefly on some of the ways in which the objectives were addressed during the dialogue. We do this under the following headings:

- Enabling discussion across stakeholder groups
- Exploring shared and different views
- Opportunities for building trust (overall project objective: see Introduction.)

### **Enabling discussion across stakeholder groups**

Participants in these workshops valued the opportunity to contribute their views on the draft Strategy: sharing views, hearing others' perspectives and comparing experiences were important features of the process. There were occasions on which this worked less well. All stakeholders respond emotionally to the disease and its impacts and the control measures and the different interests and impacts on different stakeholders meant that there were a very few occasions when anger or frustration spilled over into the discussion.

Every effort was made to recruit representatives from organisations across the spectrum of opinion. However, the balance of stakeholder groups did vary by location. For example, the Frome workshop was attended by more representatives from wildlife groups than the other workshops. Overall, fewer wildlife groups were involved than anticipated, potentially limiting the breadth of perspectives represented in the discussions. We can speculate on the reasons for this. It might be that these groups were less likely to feel that their views would hold weight, particularly at a time when the pilot culls were underway. Timing undoubtedly played a role too: many wildlife groups will have limited resource and may have needed a longer period of time to organise their involvement. Finally, representation on the Oversight Group was less broad than anticipated – again, perhaps for reasons of time – and this meant that making contact with wildlife groups was more difficult in the planning stages than it might otherwise have been.

### **Exploring shared and different views**

For most participants the opportunity to hear other perspectives and explore views – whether shared or contrasting – seemed to be welcome. On some issues there was broad agreement – for example, on the importance of using a wide range of control measures and the inclusion of wildlife control amongst these measures. On others – such as the appropriate control measures to address bTB infection in badgers – stakeholders' views diverged, with wildlife groups privileging badger vaccines and farmers and most vets preferring culling.

There was broad agreement on the value of a collaborative and more local approach to controlling bTB. However, some stakeholders made any additional involvement – particularly if this involved costs – contingent upon having more influence and decision-making power.

### **Opportunities for building trust**

A few stakeholders expressed scepticism about the value of the workshops: these people felt that they had conveyed their views on many previous occasions but not been heard and that action rather than talk was needed. Levels of trust in the government are clearly low across many of those dealing with the impact of bTB, particularly in the High Risk and Edge Areas. While most participants welcome this opportunity to discuss the future development of the Strategy the extent to which it provides a basis for increasing trust will depend - in part, at least - on the extent to which stakeholders continue to be involved over time and on whether the issues they raised in this project are reflected in the evolution of the Strategy.

# Appendices

## A1. Methodology

### Factors informing process design

Bovine TB is an epidemiologically and politically complex issue. The themes laid out within Defra's draft Strategy are broad and overlapping; there are a number of different ways in which the process design might be approached. The process design took into account the following:

- The importance of openness, transparency and integrity: ensuring that participants are provided with all relevant background to the project
- Ensuring that information provided does not steer participants towards particular conclusions or present particular positions as more merit worthy or 'reasonable' than others
- The importance of facilitators remaining impartial: they should guide process and help with the presentation of information and clarification of concepts but not contribute their own views.
- The need to provide participants with the necessary scientific information in the form of 'building blocks', to enable them to engage with the social and ethical issues at the reconvened events.
- Ensuring that information is adequate and relevant and that additional detail is available if required, without being excessive
- The need to check understanding of information provided as the process continues
- The need to track any changes in views as the process continues and whether particular information contributed to this change
- The importance of designing in a variety of activities to maintain momentum and interest
- The need to provide information in a range of formats/media, including written, presented, video and 'discovery' processes.

The process design was informed by input from Defra, Sciencewise and the Oversight Group.

Stimulus materials including PowerPoint presentations, information sheets and case studies were also produced for use at these workshops.

The detailed process plan for the ten stakeholder workshops is below:

Time	Description	Notes
8.15	Set up: cabaret room layout (small tables each with 10 chairs facing projector screen) Paper banks Front wall/screen for purposes, objectives, agenda, etc. Projector set up and PowerPoint presentation loaded	
9.00	Briefing for table facilitators and Defra attendees	
9.30	Arrive, tea/coffee, registration	
9.55	Ushering: Participants take their seats	
10.00	Introduction of people in the room and their roles today (Defra, OPM, participants, evaluator) Objectives of the day Agenda Ground rules Point out the question board Introductions at tables (name and organisation/where they're from)	Confirm 10 meetings in all and that all feedback today will be reviewed and considered in finalising the draft strategy. Note on short breaks and short lunch to end by 2.30pm Note that workshop is focussed on the areas where there is still scope for influence. For example in the morning session we have flagged the measures that Defra has already decided to deploy.
10.15	Session 1: Introduction and context-setting –  Defra Presentation: Introduction and context setting; aims of the draft strategy; risk-based approach and rationale; summary of current and proposed bTB control regime; inc. the way the measures for the 3 types of area interrelate.	Recognise that there is a lot of expertise and experience in the room Note that the pilot cull is not up for discussion today. There is a ministerial decision to be taken after the pilot culls on the basis of the evidence.
10.30	Small table discussion: initial views on the strategy - invite tables to aim to agree 2 key comments or questions for plenary Q&A	
10.40	Plenary: Q&A	
10.50	Session 2: Bovine TB control measures Brief: The aim of this session is to provide participants	The sessions have been shortened to make it more

Time	Description	Notes
10.55	<p>with the opportunity to discuss and give input on (1) the measures proposed for their area; and (2) the measures as a whole.</p> <p>[Materials on the tables:            Summary of potential options for the area - A3 sheet for each participant showing the options for that particular area as identified in the draft strategy (e.g. High Risk Area workshops will look at Figure 3 - Potential options for the High Risk Area on pg.101 of the strategy document)            Control measure information cards - A5 cards, one for each measure, colour coded to show which measures Defra has decided to deploy and which are still up for discussion            Large map showing measures that Defra has already decided to deploy - A3 map showing the three areas and agreed measures for all the areas, so participants can see the starting point for discussions and where there is still scope for influence [or three A3 maps per table may be easier to manage]</p> <p>Small table discussion (Tea/coffee available to pick up and bring back to tables)            Part 1: Table facilitators ask participants to review the summary of potential options for the area and then invite participants to give their feedback on the preferred measures for their area. The facilitator can keep the information cards with them and mention that they are there for reference, if needed.</p> <p>Questions:            Are the preferred measures the right measures - and/or are there any gaps? Why are they not right?            Does this vary according to location?            Has Defra missed anything, e.g. unforeseen implications? If so, what should Defra do about them?</p>	<p>feasible for farmers and vets to attend, and therefore we are not able to look at all areas in more detail.</p> <p>Note for Edge Area workshops:            Edge Area workshops may need to be tailored to allow participants to consider the interactions between areas (low-edge and edge-high)</p> <p>[Materials - A4 summary table of potential options for the area for each participant]            [Materials - Control measure information cards for reference]</p>
11.35	<p>Part 2: Invite participants to give their quick feedback on the whole package of measures in the draft strategy - is this the best possible balance of measures for the strategy? Facilitators invite comments on the control measures as a whole, across all areas, in the last few minutes. Conversation can be focussed around the large map showing already</p>	<p>[Materials - A3 maps showing confirmed measures]</p>

Time	Description	Notes
11.40	<p>determined measures.</p> <p>Station facilitators remind participants of Question Board - invite participants to write questions on post-its and hand to facilitator/stick on board.</p>	
11.45	<p>Session 3: Governance, partnership and delivery</p> <p>Defra presentation: Outline rationale for a new governance and delivery model; summarise the key features of New Zealand case study and Government's emerging thinking so far.</p> <p><i>Lead facilitator: add that the afternoon session will focus on two aspects of a potential future model: the role of regional partnership working, and how funding and delivery responsibilities can be fairly distributed between government and industry.</i></p>	<p>Presentation will emphasise that NZ Govt has appointed an industry-led private company as the 'management agency' for the NZ bTB Eradication Plan enshrined in law. The management agency has responsibility for operational policy decisions within the overarching legal/policy framework.</p>
12.05	<p>Small table discussion: invite participants to agree one or two succinct questions/comments at tables</p>	
12.10	<p>Plenary: Q and A</p> <p>Lead facilitator to ask participants if they want to switch tables after lunch. If so, ask everyone to move bags to the side on the way to the buffet then sit anywhere they like.</p>	
12.30	LUNCH	
13.00	<p>Session 3 Part 1. Governance and Partnership working - what role can stakeholders play in achieving TB free status?</p> <p>Small table discussion: ask participants to reflect on Defra's previous presentation and review NZ case study.</p> <p>Questions for discussion:</p> <p>What are the things you like about the NZ governance model?</p> <p>What are the things you dislike about the NZ governance model?</p> <p>Views on the TB Free style committee in England.</p> <p>Who might be on the TB Free style committee in England?</p> <p>What activities might such a committee be involved in?</p>	<p>[Materials – NZ case study]</p>

Time	Description	Notes
13.25	<p>What powers would the committee need?</p> <p>Views on the National Representatives Committee. If there were to be a similar committee in England:</p> <p>Who might sit on a National Representatives Committee?</p> <p>What activities might such a committee be involved in?</p> <p>Are there aspects of other relevant models that you like?</p> <p>Overall, what should government be responsible for delivering, and what should industry (with the committees above) be responsible for?</p> <p>Plenary: brief feedback</p>	
13.35	<p>Defra presentation: Outline of current funding status, rationale for a new funding model, and future funding options as outlined in the strategy.</p>	
13.40	<p>Session 3 Part 2. What's fair? Future options for funding.</p> <p>Facilitators guide participants through the materials before asking the following questions:</p> <p>What do you think is fair about the current funding breakdown?</p> <p>What do you think is unfair? For whom? If farmers, for specific types of farmer?</p> <p>What do you think about the future funding options:</p> <p>Stakeholders paying more for bTB measures</p> <p>Government reducing its intervention in the market</p> <p>Developing insurance options</p> <p>Establishment of a mutual bTB control fund co-financed by Government</p> <p>And what do you think would be the fairest and most efficient package all round?</p> <p>Plenary: brief feedback</p>	<p>[Materials - What's fair? Future options for funding]</p>
13.55		
14.05	<p>Final small table discussions: agree one or two final</p>	

Time	Description	Notes
14.10	key messages for Defra Plenary: brief feedback	
14.15	Defra: summarise next steps (including a reminder that everyone is welcome to submit their responses to the online consultation) + thank to everyone for coming.	
14.20	Lead facilitator: ask all participants to fill in the evaluation forms and hand them to their table facilitator.	
14.30	CLOSE	



### **A3. Workshop locations**

Workshop locations were selected by Defra to ensure coverage of high risk, edge and Low Risk Areas. The list of locations is shown below.

1. Frome, Somerset, 3 September 2013
2. Launceston, Cornwall, 4 September 2013
3. Worcester, Worcestershire, 6 September 2013
4. Plumpton, East Sussex, 9 September 2013
5. Thame, Oxfordshire, 10 September 2013
6. Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, 11 September 2013
7. Leek, Staffordshire, 12 September 2013
8. Norwich, Norfolk, 16 September 2013
9. Kendal, Cumbria, 18 September 2013
10. Thirsk, North Yorkshire, 19 September 2013<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix 3 for details of the numbers attending each workshop and the organisations represented.

## A3. Profile of participants

### Recruitment and sampling strategy

When recruiting we aimed to keep to the original stakeholder quota, as agreed with Defra. This consisted of:

- 10 – 20 farmers/farmer organisations
- 5 – 10 vets/veterinary organisations
- 10 institutions including academics

Farmers and vets were recruited in the first instance through intermediary networks and advertising on farming websites, including the National Farming Union, TB South West Advisory Service, Farming Community Network, XLVets and RCVS. Posters and flyers were sent to 25 auction markets to advertise the events. Emails and/or phone calls were sent to dairy and beef farms and bovine, farm and large animal vets found through internet searches, and veterinary clinics searched for using the RCVS database.

Confirmed attendees were asked to pass on the event information to colleagues who may be interested in attending.

Vets were also recruited mainly through intermediary bodies such as XLVets. Regional representatives of the RCVS were emailed to pass on invitations to colleagues.

Institutional stakeholders - including wildlife and environment groups, local councils, academics, and supply chain representatives - were identified from stakeholder lists provided by Defra and invited by email following online research for contact details. Invitees who were unable to attend were often able to pass on the invitation to another relevant person in their organisation.

An overview of the stakeholders attending the ten workshops is in the table below:

Workshop location	No. of attendees	List of organisations
Frome	Total - 26 Farmers - 8 Vets - 3 Other - 15	EBLEX Frome Market Humane Society International National Farmers Union Reading University Organic Milk Suppliers Cooperative Soil Association South West Alpaca Group South West Wildlife Trusts Specialist Cheesemakers Association Waitrose Wildlife Trust Woodland Trust XLVets

Workshop location	No. of attendees	List of organisations
Launceston	Total - 30 Farmers - 15 Vets - 6 Other - 9	Cornwall Council Family Farmers Association Farming Community Network Cornwall Methodist Church South Devon Herd Book Society WestPoint Veterinary Group Women's Food and Farming Union
Worcester	Total - 32 Farmers - 14 Vets - 5 Other - 13	Animal Welfare Group Cob House Fisheries Countryside and Community Research Institute Dairy Crest Environmental Research Group Oxford Farming Community Network Worcestershire Group National Farmers' Union (NFU) Herefordshire Nature Trust Royal Agricultural Society of England Royal Agricultural University Cirencester Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons TB Eradication Advisory Group for England Veterinary Association for Wildlife Management Waitrose Worcestershire Wildlife Trust
Plumpton	Total - 19 Farmers - 12 Vets - 3 Other - 4	Farming Community Network National Farmers' Union WestPoint Vets
Thame	Total - 26 Farmers - 8 Vets - 5 Other - 13	Animal Health and Welfare Board for England Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust British Veterinary Camelid Society Environmental Research Group, University of Oxford Gloucester Wildlife Trust Hampshire County Council National Farmers' Union Oxfordshire County Council Thame Market The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution

Workshop location	No. of attendees	List of organisations
		WestPoint Veterinary Group
Melton Mowbray	Total - 29 Farmers - 14 Vets - 4 Others - 11	Animal Health and Wellbeing Board for England (AHWBE) Farming Community Network Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust Muller Wiseman Tesco National Farmers' Union
Leek	23 Farmers - 10 Vets - 2 Other - 11	Country Land & Business Association Midlands National Farmers' Union NWF Agriculture Staffordshire County Council TB Eradication Advisory Group XLVets
Norwich	Total - 25 Farmers - 7 Vets - 1 Other - 17	Blakes Abattoir Country Land & Business Association East Anglia Board National Farmers' Union Norfolk County Council Norfolk Trading Standards Norfolk Wildlife Trust Norwich Livestock Market Royal Society for the Protection of Birds South Devon Herd Book Society Stanford Livestock Market
Kendal	Total - 30 Farmers - 14 Vets - 7 Other - 9	Country Land & Business Association Cumbria County Council Cumbria Wildlife Trust Livestock Auctioneers Association National Farmers' Union The National Trust XLVets
Thirsk	Total - 18 Farmers - 9 Vets - 4 Other - 5	Asda National Farmers' Union XLVets

## A4. Map of risk areas

The map below shows the current Low Risk Area, Edge Area and High Risk Area as outlined in Defra's draft Strategy.

