Dear

Consultation on Controlling the Spread of Bovine Tuberculosis in Cattle in High Incidence Areas in England: Badger Culling.

On 15 December 2005 Defra launched a consultation on badger culling as a means of controlling bovine TB in cattle in England. As one of our main stakeholders on this issue we are writing to invite your organisation to participate as part of the wider public debate. The consultation closes on 10 March 2005.

The role of badgers in bovine TB in cattle has long been the subject of debate. The Krebs Report (1997) stated "the sum of evidence strongly supports the view that, in Britain, badgers are a significant source of infection in cattle" and this remains the position today. Now, new results from the Randomised Badger Culling ('Krebs') Trial, together with the results from the Republic of Ireland Four Area Trial and other scientific evidence has provided a basis for the Government to involve the wider public in the decision making process on badger culling. The consultation document presents the scientific evidence, looks at the balance of costs and benefits, and considers the implications of a cull for animal welfare and conservation.

Electronic copies of the consultation paper, accompanying partial Regulatory Impact Assessment can be downloaded from the following weblink: http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/badgers-tbcontrols/index.htm

Further information including a full list of references can be found at www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/badgers-tbcontrols/index.htm, by contacting bTB.consultation@defra.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to Bovine TB and Badgers Consultation, Defra, 1a Page Street, London SW1 4PQ.

Confidentiality Statement
In line with Defra's policy of openness, at the end of the consultation period copies of the responses we receive may be made publicly available through the Defra Information Resource Centre, Lower Ground Floor, Ergon House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR.

The information that responses contain may also be published in a summary of responses. If you do not want your response to be made publicly available, you must clearly request that your response be treated confidentially. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in e-mail responses will not be treated as such a request.

Defra cannot guarantee the confidentiality of your response as there might be circumstances in which the Department will be required to communicate information to third parties on request in order to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR). Any queries about FOI or EIR should be directed to accesstoinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

The Information Resource Centre will supply copies of consultation responses to personal callers or in response to telephone or e-mail requests (tel: 020 7238 6575, e-mail: defra.library@defra.gsi.gov.uk). Wherever possible, personal callers should give the library at least 24 hours' notice of their requirements. An administrative charge will be made to cover photocopying and postage costs.

Comments or complaints about the consultation process (as opposed to comments about the issues which are the subject of the consultation) should be addressed to Defra’s Consultation Co-ordinator, Area 7D Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR or email consultation.coordinator@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

Yours Sincerely,

bTB Wildlife Policy Team