

Cattle TB is spread through cattle movements:

The disease is being spread to previously clear areas like north Wales. Anglesey, an island with no badgers has had six outbreaks this year. (2009) It would seem to have been a simple matter to keep the disease out; e.g. a ban on the importation of untested cattle, followed by temporary isolation of imported stock and then post movement testing. But even these simple measures were not applied. There have been some twenty-eight outbreaks alone in north Wales attributed to cattle movements.

When will some members of the farming industry have the courage to accept that they are spreading this disease with careless cattle trading activities?

Tony Edwards Director of the Welsh Assembly Government's Animal Health Division, says, *"there is only one way the disease gets into a clean area and that's by moving infected animals."* (Western mail – Farming News – 23/6/09)

If cattle movements can spread diseases long distances to clean areas it obviously follows that they can spread diseases short distances in unclean areas. 43% of all cattle movements are less than 20kms.

Four million cattle, half the UK total, are moved from one premises to another each year, says **Dick Sibley** Devon veterinary practitioner. He states; *"If you set out to design a system that guarantees we will continue to have problems with endemic diseases then I couldn't think of a better one than this."* (Daily Post – 1/10/09)

He was speaking at a Royal Veterinary College conference on infectious diseases. *"Farmers feel compelled to buy in heifers to replace those culled as TB reactors as they will lose bonus payments from customers who demand they maintain levels of production. But moving cattle of unknown disease status to new premises greatly increased the risk of bringing in new diseases,"* he added.

Culling badgers will make bTB worse.

Detailed evaluation of the Randomised Badger Culling Trials and other scientific data highlight the limitations of badger culling as a control measure for cattle TB. Only 14 herd breakdowns were prevented after culling 1000 sq km for five years. This would mean only 2.8 prevented in the IAPA at the cost of 4 million pounds! **Professor Bourne** states: *"The clear indications are that badger culling, by whatever method adopted, is simply not a cost effective means to control cattle TB"*. (Independent Scientific Group on bTB (ISG) Final Report 2007).

Vaccination is the way forward.

Dr Robbie McDonald runs FERA's wildlife and emerging diseases programme for the Government, he is also an advisor for WAG. He is adamant that culling badgers will make bTB worse and that farmers need to start backing the vaccination programme. The work done at Woodchester Park (over some 30years) has convinced Dr McDonald that vaccinating badgers is the right way forward. He completely dismisses arguments that have been put forward against vaccination. (Farmers Guardian 4/9/09). Vaccination will start in England and possibly Ireland in May 2010 at the same time as the proposed cull is due to start in Wales, so it is available.

The Bern Convention states in section 9

'That you can only kill wildlife in order to prevent the spread of disease if no other alternative method is available'. It can now be claimed that vaccination is available and culling actually spreads the disease to new areas through perturbation. Wales therefore, could put the UK government in serious breach of the convention.

Wildlife balance will be disrupted.

The Countryside Council for Wales is deeply concerned about a badger cull in North Pembrokeshire. They fear that the removal of badgers will upset the delicate balance of the current eco-system, especially in protected areas. The Wildlife Trust for Wales goes further. **Clive Faulkner**, agricultural spokesman, said, *"It's a bad time for badgers and for Welsh democracy. We will, however, continue to fight the cull legally and responsibly."* (Welsh Wildlife magazine – Summer 2009)

What we would like the Welsh Assembly government to do now.

Follow the advice of the ISG and abandon the badger cull.

Immediately introduce the rigorous cattle control measures that will dramatically lower cattle TB and in turn Badger TB. (Woodroffe et al 26July2006)

Vaccinate badgers if necessary.

Change farming practice, to exclude conditions which allow for the maintenance and transmission of animal diseases.

