

Analysis of further data (to 25 February 2011) on the impacts on cattle TB incidence of repeated badger culling

Original Article

The Duration of the Effects of Repeated Widespread Badger Culling on Cattle Tuberculosis Following the Cessation of Culling

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Since publication of the paper "The duration of the effects of repeated widespread badger culling on cattle TB following the cessation of culling" an additional 19.5 months of cattle testing data have become available. These allowed analyses to be updated, following updates published as comments in May and July 2010.

In the time period from one year after the last proactive cull to 25 February 2011 (the post-trial period), the incidence of confirmed breakdowns in the proactive culling trial areas was 31.5% lower (95% CI: 19.1% to 42.0% lower) than in survey-only areas, and on lands up to 2km outside proactive trial areas was 4.4% lower (95% CI: 27.4% lower to 26.0% higher) than outside survey-only areas.

Exploratory analyses stratified by 6-month periods (Table 1) are consistent with an ongoing benefit of proactive culling continuing through the latest 6-month period analysed (49 to 54 months post-trial).

The effects observed outside trial areas remained consistent with no ongoing effects of proactive culling in these areas.

The post-trial results must, of course, be considered in the context of the smaller reduction seen inside proactive trial areas and the increased incidence seen outside proactive trial areas in the period from the end of the initial proactive cull until one year after the last proactive cull in each triplet. From the start of the RBCT to 25 February 2011, incidence of confirmed breakdowns in proactive culling areas was 27.4% lower (95% CI: 20.2% to 33.9% lower) than in survey-only areas. In areas up to 2km outside the trial area boundary of proactive culling areas, incidence of

confirmed breakdowns was 8.3% higher (95% CI: 14.6% lower to 37.4% higher) than in areas up to 2km outside survey-only areas.

Table 1 Estimated effects of proactive culling on the incidence of confirmed cattle TB breakdowns inside trial areas. Analyses adjust for triplet, baseline herds, and historic TB incidence (over three years). Results are split by 6-month period post-trial and include breakdowns from one year after the last proactive cull to 25 February 2011.

Time period (post-trial) Estimate (95% confidence interval) p-value

Months 1-6 -51.5% (-70.7%, -19.6%) 0.005
Months 7-12 -39.6% (-62.7%, -2.4%) 0.040
Months 13-18 -48.6% (-67.1%, -19.9%) 0.003
Months 19-24 -25.8% (-50.7%, 11.6%) 0.15
Months 25-30 -29.5% (-55.2%, 11.1%) 0.13
Months 31-36 -9.1% (-41.9%, 42.2%) 0.67
Months 37-42 -29.9% (-54.1%, 7.1%) 0.10
Months 43-48 -27.6% (-54.9%, 16.2%) 0.18
Months 49-54* -37.0% (-62.4%, 5.4%) 0.079

[* This time period had 4.6 triplet-years of data as of 25 February 2011; other time periods had the full 5.0 triplet-years.]

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No competing interests declared.

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