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£600,000 study will assess attitudes towards badger vaccination

8 April 2010 | By [Alistair Driver](#)

DEFRA'S badger vaccination project is to be accompanied a £620,000 research project into farmer attitudes towards it.

The four-year, Defra-funded study will assess the level of farmer confidence in the use of vaccination before, during and after vaccine deployment. It will also identify 'motivators and barriers' that could influence the future use of TB vaccines.

The work will be led by the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI), a collaboration between the University of Gloucestershire, the University of the West of England, Royal Agricultural College and Hartpury College.

Defra's Badger Vaccine Deployment Project (BVDP), due to be launched this summer, will take place in six TB hotspot locations of England – two in Devon, two in Gloucestershire, one in Staffordshire and one on the Herefordshire/Worcestershire border.

Farms representing an equivalent of 100sq.km will be recruited in each area. Around 600 had been signed up at the last count.

The social research will begin with a 'baseline study' of 75 farmers in eight separate areas before the vaccine is rolled out this summer, asking farmers their views on vaccination as a means of dealing with bovine TB.

Once the programme is underway, smaller groups of farmers, vets and Animal Health Officers will be questioned in each area on how they have found the process and whether their views have changed over time and why.

Dr Damian Maye, who is leading the study, said: "The bovine TB problem is seriously affecting the livestock industry and there are a lot of strong views amongst the farming community on the issue of bovine TB and whether culling or vaccination is the best way forward.

"Over the life of the project we will be able to build up a picture of attitudes which may affect farmers' future use of bovine TB vaccines and what lessons can be learned and practical know-how developed to inform the future use of (injectable and oral) badger vaccines."

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