



News

NEWS RELEASE

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Benn announces deployment of injectable badger TB vaccine

The first vaccine against bovine tuberculosis in badgers will be used in the field in England next year, Enviro Benn announced today.

The vaccine will be used in six areas of up to 100km² where there is a high incidence of bovine tuberculosis. Vaccination will start in 2010 and continue for at least five years.

It will be the first practical use of a vaccine for TB in badgers outside research trials.

The deployment project will focus on developing practical approaches for use rather than developing further effectiveness of the vaccine, although Defra will be looking at the number of cattle herd TB breakdowns in the cattle disease trends.

Hilary Benn said:

"Developing an effective vaccine for bovine TB is only half the challenge. The other is to deploy it effectively. We do that. As such it marks real progress in our fight against this terrible disease."

The project will focus on ease of use in the field, securing local engagement in the vaccination campaign, developing how and creation of a skills base. Government, the farming industry and other stakeholders working together for success.

Defra will begin to sign up participants and train personnel during 2009, with vaccination expected to begin in early 2010.

The Government is working with the Bovine TB Eradication Group for England and other key groups to develop the areas where the project will take place, looking specifically at areas with a high incidence of bovine TB in cattle.

Notes to editors

- . Since 1998, Defra has invested significantly in developing vaccines for bovine TB. More than £23 million will have been spent on research by the end of March 2009.
- . In July 2008, Hilary Benn announced that £20 million would be spent on this research area over the next three years, with the prospect of successfully developing a usable vaccine. He also made clear that additional funding would be available to Defra to run a practical project to prepare for deploying vaccines in the future – the Injectable Badger Vaccine Development Project.
- . More information on bovine TB and vaccines is available at www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/vaccination/index.htm