

# Welsh public don't want badger cull, says minister

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Welsh deputy farming minister Alun Davies has squashed any hopes that a badger cull will take place in Wales to combat bovine tuberculosis.

In a blunt message to farmers, delivered at the NFU Cymru conference in Builth Wells on Thursday (1 November), Mr Davies said that the arguments for and against a cull were over and that culling was no longer on the agenda.

He suggested that any politicians campaigning for a Welsh seat would lose their deposits if their manifesto included badger culling.

"When I was campaigning for re-election it was clear that there was no support in the Welsh public for a badger cull; in fact there is active opposition," he told farmers .

"Politicians in every constituency would lose their deposits if they were campaigning for a cull today. We can constantly look back and wish that things were different but there is no support among the Welsh public or indeed the Welsh government to go ahead with a badger cull. There is simply not a majority in the Senedd to pass the policy you require; it is a matter of mathematical reality."

He insisted that the Welsh government was the only UK administration that was actively tackling the reservoir of TB in badgers. The first cycle of a five-year badger vaccination programme was completed last month. "I know we have a policy that is in tune with the public mood," Mr Davies

added.

He sympathised with farmers whose herds were infected by bovine TB. "One of the great tragedies of the debate is that it is centred on the future of the badger and not the future of Welsh agriculture," he said.