

DAERA begins consultation on proposals to eradicate TB



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Changes TB compensation levels and an annual herd test payment are just two of the proposals in a consultation process launched by DAERA into the ongoing problem of Bovine TB.

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has today launched a public

work towards the eradication of bovine TB in Northern Ireland. These are in response to the report produced by the independent TB Strategic Partnership Group (TBSPG) in December 2016.

The consultation outlines the Department's response to the recommendations made in the TBSPG report across a number of key programme areas including management and partnership working; testing and processes; approaches to dealing with TB in wildlife; how to address bovine TB risk in the industry and improve the health of the herd; finance and funding of the programme; and plans for future research into bTB.

Robert Huey, Chief Veterinary Officer for Northern Ireland said: "I am all too aware of the devastating impact of bovine TB right across the Northern Ireland agriculture industry. The rates of bovine TB continue to rise and latest figures show a herd incidence rate of 9.26%.

"Given the significant rise in the incidence of bovine TB, the concern of the farming community and the

pressure that rising bovine TB Programme costs has on our budget, the Department has decided that, in the broader public interest, we should move forward with a consultation on proposals responding to the recommendations made by TBSPG last December.”

The key proposals are:

New management/partnership arrangements with a Northern Ireland Eradication Partnership Board, three sub-regional boards and ad hoc local disease teams;

A number of enhancements and additions to the existing bovine TB Eradication Programme;

A programme of badger removal and vaccination in targeted areas;

Greater emphasis and ownership by the farming industry on reducing risk through better herd health management;

Changes to the compensation system and the introduction of a payment for an

annual herd test.

Mr Huey added: “I would strongly encourage all those who are interested both inside and outside the farming community to read the proposals in full, as a package of measures which we believe can achieve bovine TB eradication, and respond as fully as possible to the consultation.”

The consultation will run from the 30 November 2017 until the 1 of February 2018. You can respond at <https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/daera-tb-br-policy-and-research/tb-eradication-strategy-consultation>