

Eradicating TB requires 'every tool' - Glossop
Philip Case
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Christianne Glossop

<http://www.fwi.co.uk/articles/08/10/2013/141428/eradicating-tb-requires-39every-tool39-glossop.htm>

Wales' chief vet has warned it is "too simplistic" to believe badger vaccination alone will rid the UK of bovine TB.

Christianne Glossop said TB eradication was an "ambitious, but achievable long-term goal", but it would require using "every tool in the box".

"We cannot just vaccinate our way out of this problem, but we need to exploit vaccination to its full," Dr Glossop told 200 delegates at a Zoological Society of London (ZSL) conference titled Vaccination in the Control of Bovine TB on Thursday (3 October).

"I do believe it's a potentially useful tool as part, only part, of a comprehensive programme of eradication."

Australia has managed to eradicate bovine TB and New Zealand is "well on the way to achieving bovine TB freedom", said Dr Glossop.

Notably, both countries have tackled the reservoir of disease in wildlife. Her comments come as farmers in Wales look across the border with envy as pilot culls are under way in England.
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Meanwhile, Wales is nearing the end of year two of a five-year pilot study in Pembrokeshire into the effects of vaccinating badgers.

Dr Glossop said the pilot has shown cage-trapping and injecting badgers using the BCG vaccine is "very expensive", costing more than £600 a badger a year. The pilot in the Intensive Action Area (IAA) was costing the Welsh government £1m a year.

Therefore, she appealed to organisations such as the RSPCA, National Trust, the Badger Trust and Save Me to provide funding to help roll out the badger vaccination project in other Welsh regions.

"We mustn't forget that 70% of that cost is labour. We've talked today about introducing volunteer labour to help reduce that cost. But let's make no mistake, it is technically challenging and time-consuming," she said.

There are 12,000 herds of cattle in Wales, which have been annually tested for TB since 2010. Some farmers who have suffered a TB breakdown must test their cattle every 60 days.

In the financial year 2012-13, Wales slaughtered 9,000 cattle to TB and more than 1,000 new TB herd breakdowns were identified.

Dr Glossop said the Gelli Aur college dairy farm in Carmarthenshire was a typical example of the current problem.

Its farm manager, John Owen, has been grappling with TB for the past five years and has seen 400 cattle slaughtered due to TB, she explained.

"The farm cat died of TB. They have been subject to 60-day testing, been fully compliant with all the rules and regulations and have very good biosecurity. Yet they are dealing with that problem for all that time. That's not unusual."