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DEFRA
Bovine TB and Badgers Consultation
DEFRA
1a Page Street
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Consultation on controlling the spread of bovine tuberculosis in cattle in high incidence areas in England: badger culling

- 1) Our organisation is essentially opposed to any cull of badgers, and firmly believe that if the money spent on the Krebs trial cull had been spent on fencing to separate cattle from badgers, this problem would be now be greatly reduced. We further consider that slurry spraying on fields has ensured TB has been given to badgers from cattle in many cases.
- 2) The **Report of the Independent Working Group on Snares** as presented to DEFRA last year stated: *There have been no controlled scientific experiments to access the welfare impact of snaring of a type that have been conducted to access the humanness of killing traps.*
- 3) **The Independent Scientific Group on Cattle** (25th July 05) also state: *However, serious welfare issues with body snares could arise with respect to potential injury and strangulation of badgers, although there are no published scientific data on the use of these in badgers.*

The only data that currently exists on the welfare impact of snares comes from those like ourselves who experience the terrible toll of badger deaths and injuries from snares

Our Evidence:

Badgers caught during the night when they are normally active put up a considerable struggle in snares and injure themselves, sometimes leading to death.

There is no such thing as “body snares” which is the description being given for snares used in the proposed culling. Badgers will get caught around the neck.

1) **‘Thrashing Around’**

On 13th May 1996 we engaged the services of veterinary surgeon, Richard Edwards Msc MA VetMB MRCVS to carry out a post mortem on a badger killed in a free-running snare at Goodwood, W. Sussex. Mr Edwards concluded: *Judging by the way the snare had become severely kinked, this badger had been thrashing around for some time before finally dying.* This badger also had an old snaring injury around its body, which can be seen in the picture below:



Free Running Snares

On 26th Sept. 97 we engaged the services of veterinary surgeon, Douglas Alexander M.A. Vet MB MRCVS, to post-mortem a badger found dying close to set free-running snares. This badger had scalped itself due to the relaxation of the free-running snare. Consequently, a free-running snare can relax sufficiently to allow potential escape, but thus resulting in serious injury. This is the potential problem of using snares with stops, which give a window of opportunity for escape, but at great cost.

“Another skin wound was found on the back of the skull. A deep traverse wound was also found on the underside of the neck, and I believe this to have been caused by a snare. On further examination, I found the cartilage of the trachea had been perforated by pressure from the snare.

Below: badger scalped and serious throat injuries from a free-running snare examined by veterinary surgeon, Douglas Alexander.



Thrashing Around

Further evidence of struggle can be seen in this picture showing disturbance as a result of a badger being snared in north Hampshire last year (2005)



There are therefore two reasons why snares should never be used to catch any animal:

Cruel and Indiscriminate:

Cruelty:



Indiscriminate:

The report of the Independent Working Group on Snares commissioned by DEFRA reported in 2004: *The proportion of non-target species caught and held in snares set for foxes is often quite high (the results of various surveys reviewed here ranged from 21-69%).*



We find that deer when caught in snares have been running, and so almost always injure themselves or die.



We hope that you will not cull badgers, and snares should never be used to capture badgers.

Ends

By Simon Wild on behalf of NASC