

Reference Number: DAERA/26-801



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

**Veterinary Service Animal Health
Group**
Information Communications Branch

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26 October 2026

Dear [REDACTED],

Environmental Information Regulation 2004

With regard to your request for information received by the Department on 14 October 2026 which sought the following information in bold below.

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm we hold some of the information requested.

- 1. Can I have all up to date information regarding what have been done by DAERA dept in this area (North Antrim) since my last outbreak to help stop TB spread?**

Unfortunately, your email did not provide details on the date of your last outbreak but the responses below indicate what is being done across Northern Ireland, including North Antrim.

- 2. What has done in general to stop the spread of bTB? e.g. badger /wildlife cull.**

I have laid out the work taking place to address the maintenance and spread of bovine TB throughout Northern Ireland which includes the existing Bovine TB Programme and

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the work undertaken to bring forward the actions in the Bovine Tuberculosis in NI: Blueprint for Eradication.

At present there are no additional TB measures, exclusive to North Antrim being implemented.

Bovine TB (bTB) Programme

The current Northern Ireland bTB programme, required under European law and approved by the European Commission, underpins the ability of NI's livestock sectors to trade with the EU and internationally.

A link to the programme can be found on the DAERA website at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/bovine-tuberculosis-tb-control-programme>

The programme is based upon four key pillars:

1. Detection and removal of infected animals through routine annual testing with the comparative intradermal tuberculin test (CITT; 'the skin test').
2. Abattoir surveillance.
3. Application of movement restrictions on infected herds, and further testing to enable further identification and removal of infected animals to limit onward spread of infection.
4. Epidemiological investigation and supplementary testing for herds and individual animals considered at risk to bTB herd breakdowns

Bovine Tuberculosis in NI: Blueprint for Eradication

When Minister Muir took up post in February 2024, he tasked the CVO to carry out an overarching review of bTB ([Chief Veterinary Officer - Review of Bovine Tuberculosis in Northern Ireland](#)). Following the publication of the review Minister Muir established the TB Partnership Steering group. This group, consisting of 11 key stakeholder representatives from farming, veterinary, environmental, wildlife and animal processing and livestock market sectors, worked with DAERA to produce the Bovine Tuberculosis in NI : Blueprint for Eradication ([Bovine Tuberculosis in Northern Ireland - Blueprint for Eradication](#)) which was published in April 2025. The Blueprint identifies actions under three pillars to address bTB- people, cattle and wildlife.

Workstreams have been established and to date the key achievements include:

- an external provider appointed to provide on-farm biosecurity advice;
- a cross border regionalisation research pilot commenced;
- introduction of mandatory blood testing (interferon gamma) under specific breakdown conditions with increased sample numbers of 30,000 per year; and
- the launch of revised criteria for the establishment of alternative control herds.

On the wildlife pillar

- A consultation on potential options to address the spread of bovine TB between wildlife and cattle has recently taken place and closed on 9 October 2026. Verification and analysis of responses is currently underway.

DAERAs TB portal which can be found at the following link [Tuberculosis \(TB\) Portal | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#) provides information on all aspects of bTB control on its website, including information on testing, biosecurity, wildlife and tb resources and alternative control herds.

3. What has been done in this area since meeting at Royal court Hotel approx 3/4 years ago when numerous DAERA officials were present? Lots of ideas and waffle was discussed but no real dates for commencement of any of the topics?

The meeting at the Royal Court Hotel was one of a series of meetings convened by the former TB Eradication Partnership with participation from DAERA during October and November 2022 to provide information on the newly launched *Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) Eradication Strategy for Northern Ireland* and the proposed programme of badger intervention in areas of high badger density and high incidence of bTB herd breakdowns. This part of the Strategy aimed to address the role of the badger population in the maintenance and spread of the disease.

However, a judicial review taken by Northern Ireland Badger Group and Wild Justice successfully challenged this part of the 2022 Strategy. This judgement quashed the proposed intervention on the grounds that the consultation did not disclose enough information to meet fairness requirements. A link to the judgement issued in October 2023 is publicly available and can be found at [2023 Judgement NIBG AND WILD JUSTICE](#). The ruling stated that “*The result will be that, assuming the Department wishes to proceed with a wildlife intervention element to the Strategy, it will have to reconsult on that aspect of it in compliance with legal requirements.*”

Since then, the department progressed work to close gaps identified in the ruling including updating its bank of scientific research papers, revisiting its rationale for wildlife intervention based on the new scientific papers, carrying out a cost options analysis and environmental reviews.

The result of this work was the *consultation on Potential Wildlife Intervention Options as part of the Blueprint for Eradication* which aims to address all issues raised in the 2023 ruling. The consultation suite of documents can be found online [Consultation on Potential Wildlife Intervention Options as part of the Bovine Tuberculosis in Northern Ireland: Blueprint for Eradication | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#) and includes those mentioned above as well as equality assessments as annexes.

This consultation closed on 9 October with a large number of responses submitted. A summary of the consultation responses will be published in due course.

If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department. If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

Yours sincerely,



Veterinary Service Animal Health Group