



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE BADGER CULL LICENCE APPLICATION FOR SECOND YEAR

Northamptonshire Badger Group are dismayed to see a badger cull licence has yet again been applied for in the county, which could see thousands of badgers killed in the next 4 years.

For a second year running, Natural England has received applications for a badger cull licence in Northamptonshire and a cull company for the county was formed at the end of last year, run by farmers living in the Brackley to Towcester area. If given, this licence will be for a 4 year intensive cull of badgers in the County. According to the Government policy, this is the last year that the 4 year intense cull licences are being issued and will see tens of thousands more badgers doomed to be shot, some suffering a lingering and agonising death. Meanwhile, costs to taxpayers and heartache for farmers will continue to rise because culling barely affects disease rates in cattle.

The Government policy of culling badgers to control bovine TB in cattle is highly controversial on scientific grounds, with badgers identified as a significant source for the ongoing spread in cattle, despite there being good, independent scientific evidence that cattle to cattle transmission is the major transmission route for disease. Cattle live in close proximity to each other, many inside for large parts of their lives and cattle excrement and slurry which is routinely spread over farms has shown to have the m.bovis bacteria living in it for 6 months or more. In a recently published paper, the 'Badgers Found Dead Study' the figures show that badgers are not a reservoir for bovine TB, but like many other animals, both wild and domesticated such as sheep and deer – they're just another spill-over host.

Many farmers have been misled into believing that killing badgers will stop bTB in their herds, but nearly as many cattle were sent to premature slaughter last year by farmers across England, as in 2012, when the present badger culling policy began. Around 1% of cattle are killed due to bTB per year, yet the current badger cull will kill around 50% of the badger population in England.

Northamptonshire is an edge area, meaning it does not have high TB incidences and the group believes other factors such as cattle biosecurity, movement controls, more accurate testing of cattle such as the award winning Actiphage test and vaccination, should be explored first. The current test for cattle dates back 70 years and is so inaccurate it can leave more than 40% of bTB positive cattle undetected in the herd or see healthy cattle killed instead.

The group believe that landowners and farmers in the area are not being given all the facts and are instead being coerced and swayed to believe that culling is the answer, which it is not. They have also been informed that the cull company set up last year, has been calling local farmers to encourage them to join the cull, in order for them to get a licence. A continuous area signed up to cull is needed for a licence to be given.

They are asking farmers and landowners to think twice before they sign up to killing the iconic badger, who have existed here for nearly 500,000 years when it is clear from the data that culling badgers will not eradicate bTB.

Northamptonshire Badger Group can be emailed on: northantsbadgergroup@gmail.com or full contact details are on their website www.northamptonshirebadgers.co.uk.

ENDS**NOTES TO EDITOR**

For 30 years Northamptonshire Badger Group, a dedicated group of volunteers have been actively involved in the welfare of badgers in Northamptonshire. They: Collect and record data on badgers, their activity and setts, supply information and work with authorities, planners & developers to help protect badgers from development. Assist Wildlife Crime Police Officers and the RSPCA where harm to badgers is suspected. Rescue & pay for vet treatment & return badgers to the wild. Advocate for badgers & support the public with advice.