

**EIR 11644**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 09 February 2022 12:54  
**To:** NAME & EMAIL REDACTED  
**Cc:** Suzanne Jarvis BVA NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com>; NAME REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED; NAME REDACTED BVA NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com; [REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk; NAME REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED  
**Subject:** RE: Vet Record paper on Effectiveness of Badger Cull: Heads up

Dear NAME REDACTED,

The paper we talked about (Langton et al) has been refereed and considered carefully by our editorial team and revisions are being made following that review process. As is customary with the most interesting paper in each issue, there will also be a "Research Comment" by one of the external reviewers. It is planned that the paper and the Research Comment will be published online on 18<sup>th</sup> March and in print on the 19/3. The editorial team will send [REDACTED] the final version of the paper on or before the 21<sup>st</sup> February for Defra's comments which can be published in the same issue if submitted before press day on 15<sup>th</sup> March. Thus you will have good time in which to provide comment. If you or [REDACTED] have any further queries do contact directly the Editor in Chief, Suzanne Jarvis.

With best wishes,

Sandy,

Professor [REDACTED] FRCVS, FMedSci, HonFRSE,  
House of Lords,  
SW1A 0PW

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**From:** NAME REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED  
**Sent:** 09 February 2022 11:45  
**To:** NAME REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED; [REDACTED] EMAIL REDACTED  
**Subject:** FW: Vet Record paper on Effectiveness of Badger Cull: Heads up

Dear [REDACTED],

I am writing to follow up on an issue you raised with us (Christine and I) at our last meeting. It is regarding a Vet Record paper challenging the Effectiveness on Badger Cull as part of the TB Policy Eradication Programme.

I remember you mentioned that you did not have time to scrutinise it but you asked Vet Record editorial team to peer reviewed.

We agreed that your Office will send us a copy of the proposed paper so our TB [REDACTED] had opportunity to see and analyse it.

We can't locate the paper, but I would be grateful if your office could send us a copy of the paper please.

In the meantime, if you require anything from Christine or her team please do not hesitate to contact us.  
Many thanks and best regards

NAME REDACTED  
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)

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**From:** [REDACTED] EMAIL REDACTED@defra.gov.uk  
**Sent:** 24 February 2022 09:34  
**To:** NAME REDACTED BVA NAME REDACTED@bva.co.uk; NAME REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED  
**Cc:** NAME REDACTED (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bva.co.uk  
**Subject:** Re: 8th March meeting

Hi NAME REDACTED

I've a meeting with just NAME REDACTED and NAME REDACTED on Monday- I think it would be worth touching on this article at that meeting with just them initially. In short, we have strong concerns regarding the methodology: this raises questions on the integrity of the peer review process and the journal's acceptance for publication in its current form.



Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** NAME REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED  
**Sent:** 22 February 2022 18:10  
**To:** NAME REDACTED (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bva.co.uk  
**Cc:** NAME REDACTED (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bva.co.uk; [REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk  
**Subject:** RE: 8th March meeting

Hi NAME REDACTED

The slot on the 8<sup>th</sup> March has now moved to 1<sup>st</sup> March. This is not a briefing for the whole bTB Partnership but rather a discussion with NAME REDACTED, NAME REDACTED and NAME REDACTED. NAME REDACTED had specifically asked for this. We will brief the wider Partnership at a later date and in line with publication dates.

I hope that helps but do get back in touch as needed.

NAME REDACTED

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**From:** NAME REDACTED (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bva.co.uk  
**Sent:** 22 February 2022 18:04  
**To:** NAME REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED  
**Cc:** NAME REDACTED NAME REDACTED@bva.co.uk; [REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk  
**Subject:** 8th March meeting

Hi NAME REDACTED,

NAME REDACTED is abroad on holiday at the moment but we spotted in his diary that there's a meeting on 8th March to brief the TB partnership about the Vet Record paper on badger culling.

We weren't sure if this had been put in based on the original planned publication date of 4/5 March.

The VR paper is now due to be published online on Fri 18 March and is under strict embargo until then. It's been shared with Defra by Vet Record for a comment for the accompanying news piece, and NAME REDACTED was obviously keen that [REDACTED] and NAME REDACTED had the chance to see it and plan for briefing the partnership *after* publication.

We're concerned about lots of people (ie the whole TB partnership) seeing it or being briefed on it before publication given the strict embargo.

I've copied NAME REDACTED in here and he's able to check emails in the evenings while he's away. I'm also happy to have a chat about it if that would be helpful. I'll be in the office tomorrow and contactable on NUMBER REDACTED (I might just have to duck out of a committee meeting).

I think NAME REDACTED has separately been in touch with NAME REDACTED (our exec PA) to find a slot for NAME REDACTED and Christine (or possibly NAME REDACTED) to chat when NAME REDACTED is back from his holiday.

Thanks  
NAME REDACTED

Web: [www.bva.co.uk](http://www.bva.co.uk)

***Please note: if you receive this email out of hours and it needs a response, there is no expectation to reply to it outside of your normal working pattern. Thanks.***

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**From:** Suzanne Jarvis (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com  
**Sent:** 02 March 2022 15:13  
**To:** [REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk  
**Subject:** Re: Embargoed Vet Record Langton et al paper on the impact of badger culling

Yes, that's the date [REDACTED]. Press day is 15<sup>th</sup> and we would need any commentary/letter from yourselves latest Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks  
Suzanne

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**From:** "[REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk"  
**Date:** Wednesday, 2 March 2022 at 11:29  
**To:** "Suzanne Jarvis (BVA)" NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com, [REDACTED] EMAIL REDACTED  
**Cc:** "Middlemiss, Christine" NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk, NAME REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED, NAME REDACTED (BVA)" NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com, "NAME REDACTED (BVA)" NAME REDACTED@bva.co.uk, EMAIL REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Embargoed Vet Record Langton et al paper on the impact of badger culling

Sorry one other thing:

Please can I check your timing plans are still for it to be published online on 18<sup>th</sup> March and in print on the 19/03?

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk  
**Sent:** 02 March 2022 09:32  
**To:** 'Suzanne Jarvis (BVA)' NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com; [REDACTED] EMAIL REDACTED  
**Cc:** Middlemiss, Christine NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk; NAME REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED; NAME REDACTED (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com; NAME REDACTED NAME REDACTED@bva.co.uk; NAME REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED  
**Subject:** RE: Embargoed Vet Record Langton et al paper on the impact of badger culling  
**Importance:** High

Dear Susanne and Sandy,

Thank you for sharing an embargoed copy of the Langton et al paper. We do appreciate this heads-up and opportunity to comment.

We will send you some media lines via our Press Office team as previously discussed.

However in advance of that, we wanted to raise with you our grave concerns about this article as it is clear to us that the methodology has fundamental scientific flaws. The authors have failed to take into account the temporal nature of the roll-out of culling, only considering a comparison of culled and non-culled areas each year. Their statistical approach would only work if all culling had started simultaneously which is clearly not the case. This means the underlying basis for defining their null hypothesis is incorrect. Merging the data each year irrespective of when culling was initiated is masking the true effects of culling which can take years to manifest, and also fails to account for the relatively higher incidence of bTB in newly recruited cull areas compared to those remaining uncultured. The latter results in a constantly changing uncultured area which has not been taken into account making figure 3 highly misleading. Moreover, there is an error in at least one of the statistical formula presented, and correlating group level observations with no appreciation for confounding factors makes their inferences highly susceptible to errors (the so called "ecological fallacy"). These numerous fundamental errors may reflect a lack of epidemiological and statistical expertise of the authors, and unfortunately brings into question the peer review and acceptance process that has occurred to date.

We appreciate that these issues may have already been brought to the attention of the editorial board during the peer review process, but the decision was still taken to publish in the current form. In this case we would strongly request our comments are published as a research comment in the same edition of the journal alongside this paper, to make clear the errors in the methodology and demonstrate how accounting for the factors explained above using the same publicly available data presents a very different picture.

If these errors were missed during peer review, another round of review with more emphasis on the epidemiological and statistical expertise may highlight these errors to the authors. If you do not want further peer review then we would still request that our comments are published as a research comment in the same edition of the journal alongside the paper.

If published as it currently stands we would be concerned, and honestly saddened, that this would reflect badly on the BVA and the Vet Record, and in turn the scientific rigour of the British veterinary profession which they represent. We would hope that any accompanying editorials consider these methodological flaws when making comments about the impact of policies to control bovine TB, and the need for high quality science to inform a balanced debate over badger culling which we appreciate to be controversial for many. At present, we consider this article in the current form adds nothing to the culling debate, but ultimately that decision rests with the editorial board of Vet Record.

Please do let us know what approach you decide to take, so we can draft the appropriate response.

Best wishes,

■

■ **MSc MA VetMB MRCVS** (she/her)  
Deputy Director bovine TB Programme

Animal and Plant Health and Welfare Directorate  
**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)**  
[Website](#) [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#)

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**From:** Suzanne Jarvis (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com>  
**Sent on:** Thursday, March 17, 2022 1:04:13 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk>  
**CC:** NAME REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED  
**Subject:** Re: Embargoed Vet Record Langton et al paper on the impact of badger Culling

[REDACTED] the authors have opted for open access for the paper.  
At the moment all VR content is free to view due to a tech project that is running for the next couple of weeks, but after that letters are usually behind the paywall.

S

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**Suzanne Jarvis**

Editor in Chief

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**From:** "[REDACTED]" NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk>  
**Date:** Thursday, 17 March 2022 at 12:43  
**To:** "Suzanne Jarvis (BVA)" NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com>  
**Cc:** NAME REDACTED EMAIL REDACTED  
**Subject:** RE: Embargoed Vet Record Langton et al paper on the impact of badger culling

Thank you.

And I've another question I'm afraid!

Will the Langton paper and our letter be behind a pay wall or open access?

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk>  
**Sent on:** Monday, March 7, 2022 1:09:26 PM  
**To:** NAME REDACTED (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bva.co.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Quick Q  
**Attachments:** RE Embargoed Vet Record Langton et al paper on the impact of badger culling .msg (130 KB)  
Absolutely yes.  
Here's the email I set to Suzanne, copying in NAME REDACTED.  
■

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**From:** NAME REDACTED (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bva.co.uk>  
**Sent:** 07 March 2022 12:55  
**To:** [REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Quick Q  
Okay no problem. Are you happy for us to speak quite openly about what you shared with us?  
NAME REDACTED

**From:** NAME REDACTED (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bva.co.uk  
**Sent:** 03 March 2022 14:17  
**To:** [REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk  
**Subject:** Quick Q  
REDACTED  
Ref the paper I understand the VR team are meeting on Monday to discuss your email.  
NAME REDACTED  
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**From:** [REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk>  
**Sent on:** Wednesday, March 9, 2022 11:23:30 AM  
**To:** Suzanne Jarvis (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Amendment to TB paper  
Thanks Suzanne,  
Can I check that the methodology and figures remain the same as the version we've seen?  
Best wishes,  
■

**From:** Suzanne Jarvis (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com>

**Sent:** 09 March 2022 11:18

**To:** [REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk>

**Subject:** Re: Amendment to TB paper

Dear [REDACTED]

Attached is the draft version of the revised abstract and conclusions – it is possible this will change slightly but unlikely now to be anything very significant, but I'm aware time is upon us so it would be useful for you to see this now.

Thanks

Suzanne

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**Suzanne Jarvis**

Editor in Chief

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**From:** "[REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk

**Date:** Wednesday, 9 March 2022 at 09:51

**To:** "Suzanne Jarvis (BVA)" NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com

**Subject:** RE: Amendment to TB paper

Morning Suzanne,

Any update on this?

I'm conscious you need our commentary by COP tomorrow.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Suzanne Jarvis (BVA) NAME REDACTED@bvajournals.com

**Sent:** 08 March 2022 09:10

**To:** [REDACTED] NAME REDACTED@defra.gov.uk

**Subject:** Amendment to TB paper

Dear [REDACTED]

I just wanted to alert you that it is likely we will be amending the paper slightly in light of the comments you sent. We hope to have this signed off today or tomorrow, as I appreciate it may well change your response we will get it to you as soon as possible.

And good news on the research paper, we'd be very keen to see it in due course.

Thanks

Suzanne



**Suzanne Jarvis**

Editor in Chief  
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