



Fund our badger vaccination programme

Help us protect our badgers from tuberculosis

Badgers can carry bovine tuberculosis (TB) and can transfer it to cattle. If contracted, this disease poses a significant welfare risk to cattle and can cause farmers to lose their stock. Scientific evidence shows that badger culling is not an effective solution to this problem and can sometimes make it worse by disturbing populations of badgers.

While the primary route of infection is cow-to-cow transmission (not badger-to-cow), cattle are not yet vaccinated in the UK. However, it is possible – and effective – to vaccinate badgers.

Thanks to the generosity of Somerset Badger Group, we have an amazing opportunity to vaccinate the badgers that live at our rewilding site against TB at a significantly reduced cost. The benefits of vaccination are plenty: vaccination reduces the rate of TB infection in badgers by 74%, vaccination reduces the progression, severity and transmission of the disease in infected badgers, and cubs born into vaccinated groups are 80% less likely to contract TB.

Not only will this vaccination improve the welfare of wild badgers, but importantly it will help reduce any potential spread of TB from badgers to livestock.

Bovine TB is a real threat to cattle welfare around the country, sometimes costing farmers and landowners significant amounts of money, and in rare cases their livelihoods. As we expect to have cattle on our land here at Heal, TB is a real issue we face and have been looking into ways of mitigating it. One offer came in the form of badger vaccinations. Although a much-loved mammal by the public, the badger continues to face tough battles with farmers as a carrying source of TB, often resulting in tens of thousands of badger deaths a year. One solution, especially for us as a nature conservation charity, would be to vaccinate the badgers themselves preventing the need to cull them. This will not only offer a layer of protection to our livestock against TB, but also to our immediate neighbours whose land might be visited by our resident badgers.

Impact:

Vaccinating badgers against TB will help protect our and neighbouring livestock from this disease.