

**From:** "SARGENT, Louise" <louisem.sargent@parliament.uk>   
**Subject:** Badger cull debate  
**Date:** 3 June 2013 17:07:05 GMT+01:00  
**To:** "Kim@kimstallwood.com" <Kim@kimstallwood.com>

1 Attachment, 15 KB



## **Amber Rudd MP**

Member of Parliament for Hastings and Rye  
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Dear Mr Stallwood,

Thank you for contacting me about controlling the spread of bovine TB.

For your information, I have also received letters from local farmers urging me to vote for the cull to save their cattle and stop the spread of Bovine TB.. They tell me that unless this action goes ahead it will make keeping cattle in our farms "marginal".

Bovine TB is a serious disease and its incidence has been increasing steadily since the 1980s with the number of new cases doubling every nine years. In the last 10 years the disease has cost the taxpayer £500 million. The Government remains committed to using all available means to address this disease. It has now been confirmed that the pilot badger culls go ahead in Somerset and Gloucestershire this summer. Ministers have also agreed that an area in Dorset should be prepared as a reserve.

The decision to pilot a badger cull is based on the best scientific evidence available. Evidence from Australia, the Republic of Ireland and the USA has shown that TB in cattle cannot be controlled without also controlling the disease in the surrounding wildlife population. Research has demonstrated that cattle and badgers transmit the disease to each other and that sustained culling of badgers leads to a significant reduction of the disease in cattle. The two pilot areas where culling will initially take place are both in TB hotspots. It will be overseen and evaluated by an independent expert panel reporting their findings to Ministers.

Ministers are clear that culling represents only part of a comprehensive package of measures that the Government is using to tackle bovine TB. In high-risk areas herds are tested annually and any cattle that test positive are removed. Restrictions on cattle movements have been strengthened to reduce the chance of disease spreading, and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) continues to look at ways to improve the testing of cattle for TB.

The Government has also funded and developed an injectable badger vaccine, but this has its limitations. Badgers need to be trapped before they can be vaccinated, and the process has to be repeated annually for many years. In addition the vaccine is not 100 per cent effective in preventing TB. As a result, current vaccines will not be as effective as culling in reducing the spread of the disease.

Defra is also planning to invest a further £15.5m in vaccine development over the next four years to develop an oral vaccine for badgers, which may be cheaper and more effective than an injectable vaccine, in addition to a vaccine for cattle. As the EU Commissioner Tonio Borg has recently made clear, no country has done more in this area than the UK. However, it will be many years before these methods are available and unfortunately, the vaccination of our national herd is prohibited by EU legislation. Our cattle industry cannot wait that long. It is therefore vital that the Government uses every tool at its disposal to check the progress of this devastating disease.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me about this important issue.

**Amber Rudd**  
**Member of Parliament for Hastings and Rye**  
**Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer**

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