



Hello all,

The last 12 months has seen more changes to the UK's TB policy and, at the risk of sounding like a broken record, I'd like to give you a brief update on what the current state of 'TB' affairs looks like.

Badger Vaccination

At the time of writing my TB update newsletter last year, we had been told the bare bones of the government's badger vaccination strategy. We now have more information and this year will be the first year of APHA's four year badger vaccination trial across North Wiltshire. Many farms have enrolled thanks to the hard work of the cull company that organized the culls for this area. There has also been a reasonable increase in the area of land engaging with wildlife control measures as land owners and trusts/companies that had not engaged with culling have been able to engage with vaccination.

As the trial gets under way it is clear that there is significant worry and concern across the farming community about the potential outcomes which put bluntly are: will it work? It is forecast that badger populations may take as much as 10 years to recover to pre-cull numbers (although this timeframe may be much shorter). The question must be asked, if APHA do not hit their targets of at least one third of the adult population vaccinated each year, will we create an increased opportunity for badger to cattle TB spread? And if so, what will be the next wildlife control policy be to address this?

For me the jury is still out on whether badger vaccination can effectively replace culling as the governments primary wildlife control measure. I feel that there is a place for both culling and vaccination, but we should take a more informed approach regarding disease risk and delivery. As we all know, there is no single measure that will effectively control TB, we have to employ the right tools at the right time, and that requires a well thought out government policy!

For those who have not seen the trial outline, the total area will be split into parcels of land. For each parcel, the APHA vaccination teams will spend 3 weeks with a 2 day/night period for trapping and vaccinating. Whilst on farm recently, a member of this team asked me to 'wish them luck' I suspect they will need it!

Meetings coming up...



**Beef and Sheep
Medicine Handling Course**

Thursday 11th May,
11am - 12.30pm
at the practice



Dairy Medicine Handling Course

Thursday 18th May,
11am - 12.30pm
at the practice

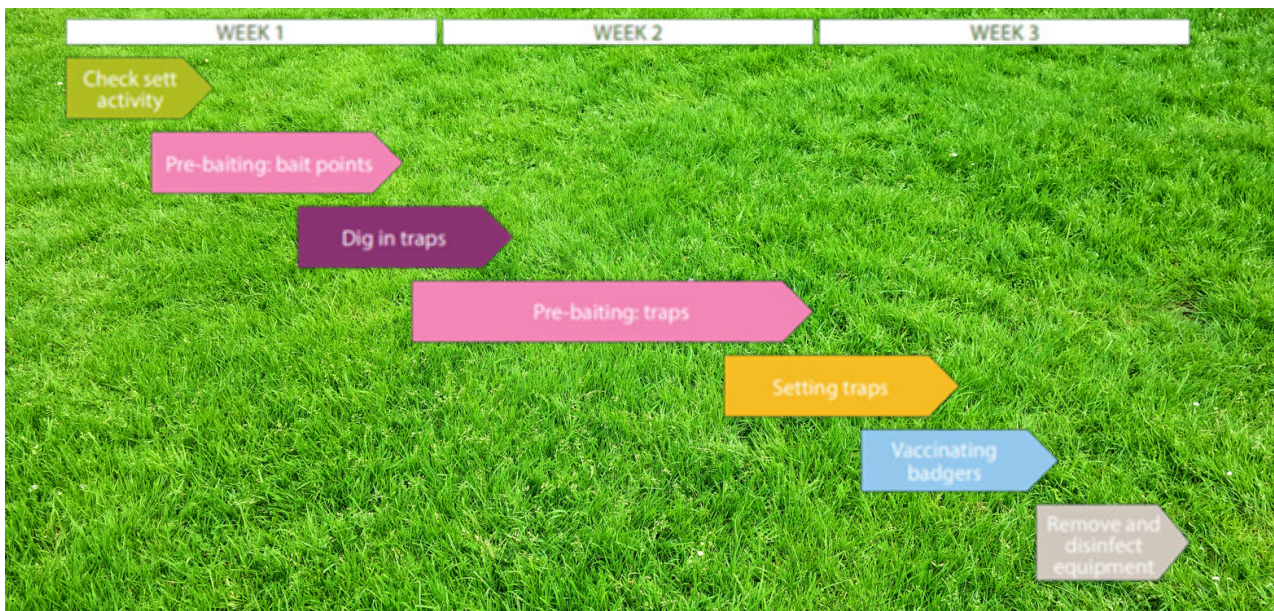


**RoMS accredited mobility scorer training,
1 day course.**

Cost £250 + Vat

Date and venue TBC

**If you would like to attend any of the above or
find out more, please contact the office on
01666 823035 or e:farm@georgevetgroup.co.uk**



Cattle Vaccination

You may have heard that the government has been developing a version of the skin test that can tell the difference between a cow infected with TB and a cow that has been vaccinated against TB (as it stands our current tests would identify a vaccinated cow as a reactor!) This ability to distinguish infected amongst vaccinated animals would be a breakthrough for TB diagnostics and provide us with the opportunity to vaccinate cattle against TB using the BCG vaccine.

The test is due to be available in 2026, however this does not mean that vaccinating cattle against TB will be immediately available. Unfortunately politics and trade deals will hamper the speed in which we can start vaccinating cows. I am involved with the NFU Vaccination Group which is working with DEFRA to provide a framework for cattle vaccination policy, I will keep you posted!

If you wish to talk more about TB then please contact the office to book a completely free TB Advisory Service visit with either myself or Ben Jowett. Over roughly 2 hours we aim to provide an overview of your farms risks and what can be done to help fight the disease (2 hours with me for free, what more could you ask for!)



Wishing you all the best,

Ben



VET TECH - UPDATE

Sheep shearing

If you have a small flock of sheep and would like them sheared, our trained Vet Tech Toby can do this for you from mid May.

Please contact the office on 01666 823035 if you would like to arrange a visit.

