

## **Wildlife and Countryside Link statement on Bovine tuberculosis in cattle**

Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) brings together voluntary organisations concerned with the conservation, enjoyment and protection of wildlife, countryside and the marine environment. Our members practice and advocate environmentally sensitive land management and food production practices and encourage respect for and enjoyment of natural landscapes and features, the historic environment and biodiversity. Taken together, our members have the support of over eight million people in the UK and manage over 476,000 hectares of land. This statement is supported by:

- Badger Trust
- Environmental Investigation Agency
- Herpetological Conservation Trust
- Mammal Society
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- The Wildlife Trusts
- Woodland Trust
- World Society for the Protection of Animals

Link welcomes the continuation of dialogue on bovine tuberculosis (bTB) encouraged by the Minister for Animal Welfare, Ben Bradshaw. Link published a detailed bTB policy statement in May 2004. This additional statement responds to demands by farming lobby groups for the implementation of badger culling prior to the completion and analysis of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT, Krebs' Trial).

1. Link believes that it would be unfortunate for data gathered in the RBCT to be released before the trial is complete and the results are published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.
2. Link believes that it is premature to consider badger culling as a means to control bTB until the RBCT is complete and the results are published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.
3. Link believes that any badger culling proposals must be subject to a full public consultation, supported by all the data collated by the completed RBCT.
4. Link believes that there is enough scientific evidence to support the immediate introduction of pre- and post-movement bTB testing and the increased use of gamma interferon bTB testing and urges the Government to do so immediately.