



Sussex  
**Badger**  
Vaccination  
**Project**

Working together to combat bTB in badgers and cattle

**Presentation to  
SDNPA Breakfast Meeting**

**27<sup>TH</sup> January 2015**

**How Badger Vaccination plays  
a significant role in reducing  
bovine tuberculosis in East Sussex**



## Sussex Badger Vaccination Project

Working together to combat bTB in badgers and cattle

## Background

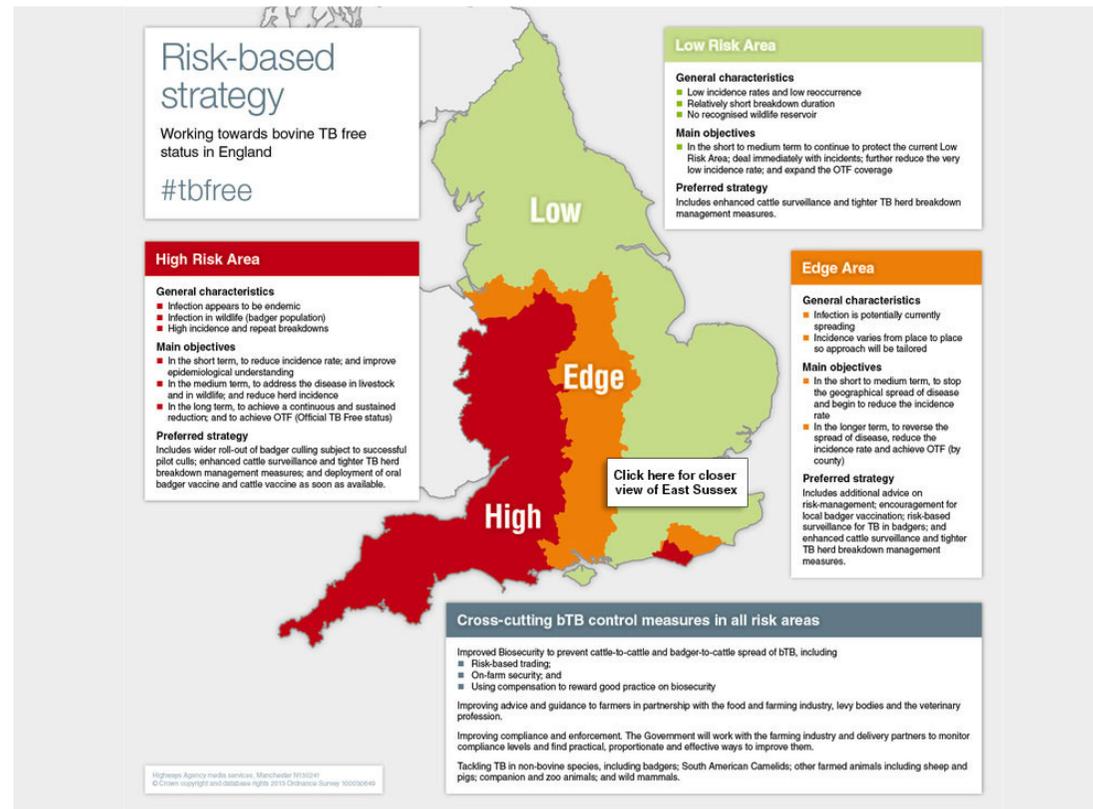
- Bovine tuberculosis – major problem for farmers and government for decades
- As well as cattle-to-cattle transmission, badgers and other wildlife have been shown to transmit the infection to cattle
- DEFRA's 25-year strategy includes tighter cattle controls plus culling in High Risk areas and badger vaccination in Edge areas
- **East Sussex is one-third High Risk, two-thirds Edge**



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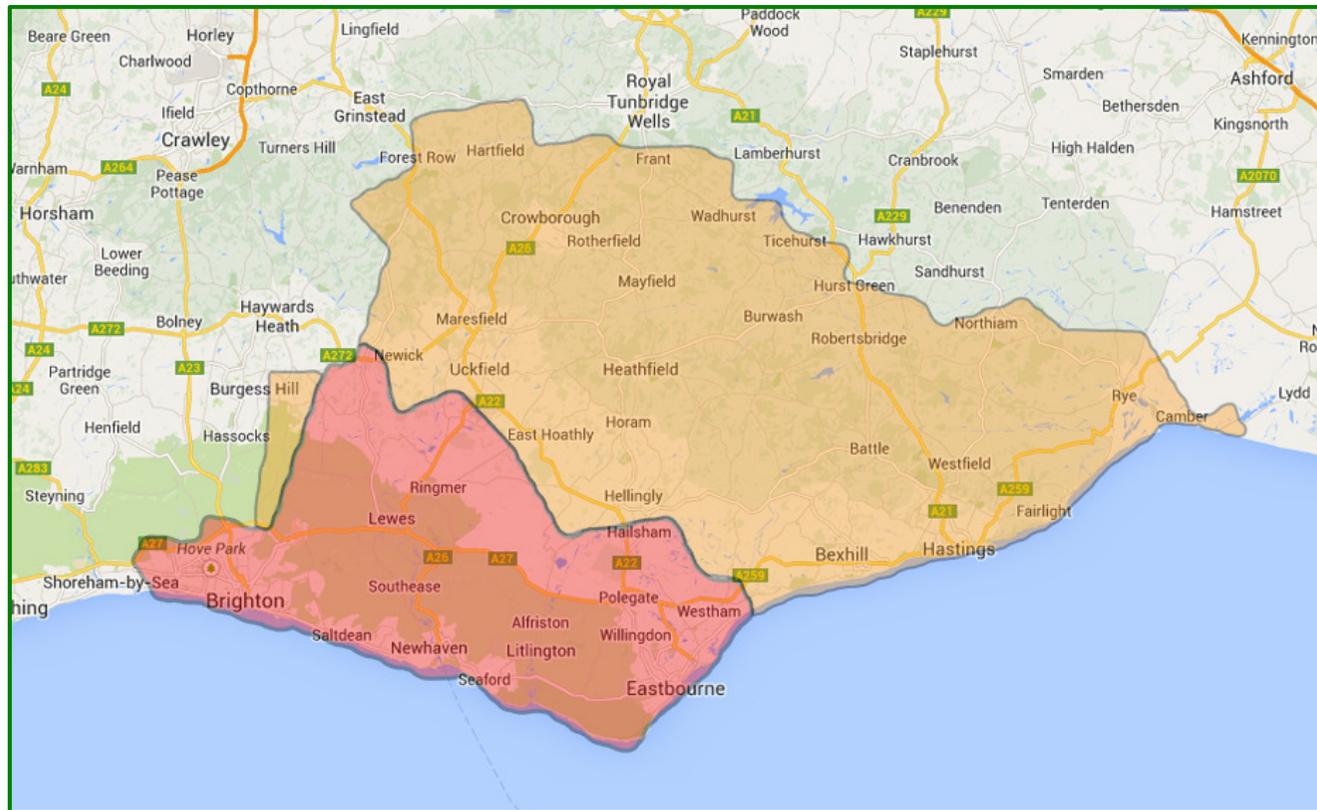




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The situation and epidemiology of bTB in East Sussex is unique

- an “island” of persistent infection
- relatively incidence low
- rather wide spread
- and a unique spoligotype

As the next two maps show, the disease level in East Sussex is more like Northamptonshire (0.58%) than like any of the High Risk counties.

Reportedly, no application to cull in East Sussex in 2014 was made to Natural England if culling were to be approved for rolling out.

It is generally believed that there’s very little appetite to cull badgers in this county.

Vaccination is a positive step towards the reduction of the disease in badgers now available to farmers and landowners here



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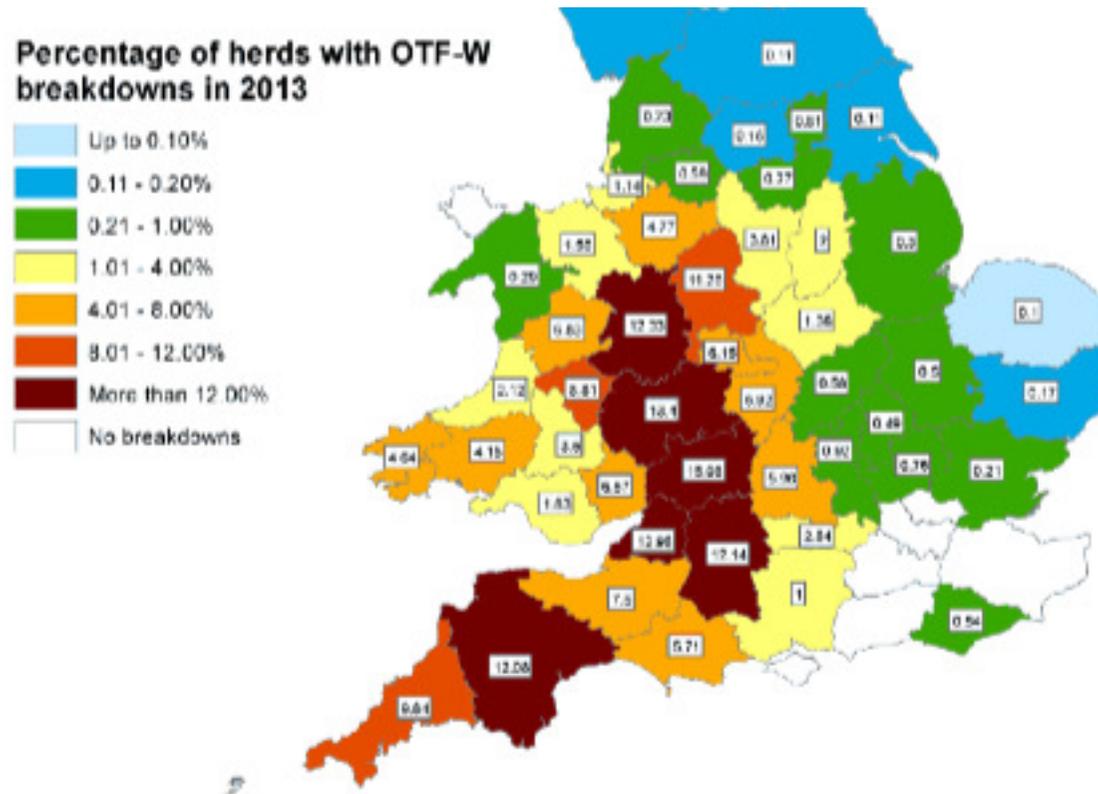


Figure 3.3: Proportion of live herds with OTF-W bovine TB breakdowns by county between January and December 2013: Number of OTF-W new breakdowns of bovine TB per 100 live herds.



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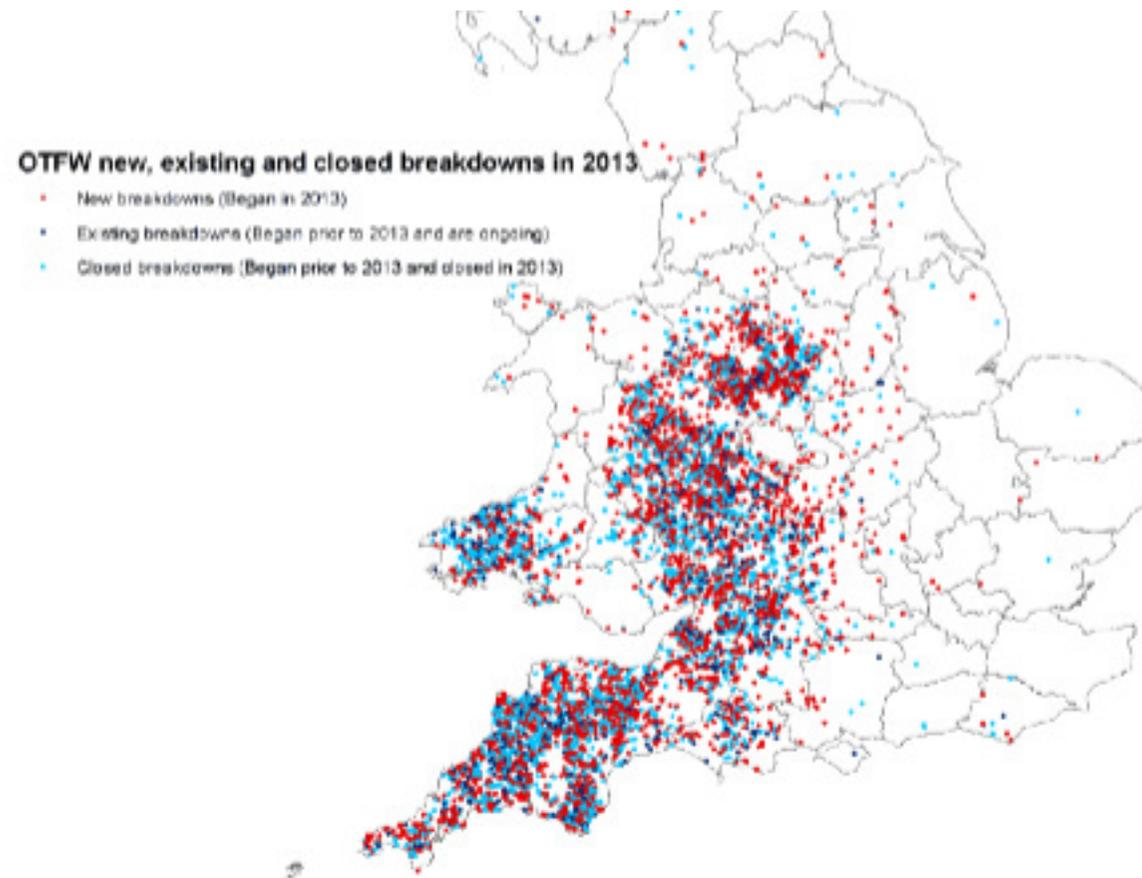


Figure 2.3: OTF-W new, existing and closed breakdowns in 2013



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### The point is ...

- East Sussex has been designated High Risk, we believe, erroneously
- Badger vaccination – ie the Edge strategy – is more appropriate here
- SBVP was set up in 2013 to offer farmers and landowners that choice – a viable, low-cost option



## Sussex Badger Vaccination Project

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### **S B V P**

- We are a non-political volunteer group whose aim is **to contribute to the eradication of bovine TB in East Sussex**
- A team of five experienced, APHA-trained, certified Lay Vaccinators who have been licensed by Natural England to trap and vaccinate badgers and additional volunteers
- A charitable company, currently applying for registered charity status
- Supported by a stakeholder group, East Sussex Badger Vaccination Coordination Group (ESBVCG) with representatives of NFU, CLA, APHA, BVA, SWT, farm vet, NFU chairman – all recognise that East Sussex is different and needs a different approach



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### **S B V P**

- Our team is professional, discreet, effective, sensitive to farmers' needs
- Because (almost) all work is done by trained volunteers, we can offer the service at **a low cost**
- We've fund-raised from the public to pay for equipment and training. Additional financial support other small charities
- We've qualified for match-funding from DEFRA for our work in 2014. We're currently preparing an application for the BEVS fund from 2015 onward
- National Trust and Sussex Wildlife Trust have agreed to pay for badger vaccination for their tenant farmers; other landowners are offering to fund part of the cost for their tenants



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### About badger vaccination

- Vaccine is BadgerBCG, licensed in 2010 after development by FERA
- No vaccination, including human BCG, is effective with 100% of subjects, but neither does it have to be to achieve “herd immunity”
- **It’s about shifting the proportion of susceptible individuals to infected ones**
- Over a 4-year programme, vaccination reduces susceptibility to bTB by 76%
- When at least 1/3 of a social group is vaccinated, the risk of infection to new cubs is reduced by 79%
- **So far, there has been no study to determine the impact of vaccinating badgers on the level of disease in cattle but all agree that reducing the disease in badgers must have a positive downward effect on the level of disease in cattle.**



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## About badger vaccination

Where is badger vaccination happening?

- APHA BVDP – Gloucestershire
- Wales Intensive Action Area – North Pembrokeshire
- Wildlife Trusts – Gloucestershire, Dorset, Cheshire, Shropshire, Somerset, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Hampshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire
- National Trust, Killerton, Devon
- **And now, East Sussex**



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### How badger vaccination is working here

- So far, we have landowner agreement on about 120 km<sup>2</sup> of land with discussions underway concerning additional land
- SWT, NT, Brighton and Hove Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Friston Forest and one other large estate – plus several individual landowners/farmers
- August 2014, carried out our first deployments; currently sett surveying in prep for 2015
- Natural England vaccinating season runs May to November – in reality May to October
- Each intervention lasts roughly two weeks and must be repeated for 3 more years
- We are keen to sign up more cattle farms in the High Risk area and the Edge
- We have the support of the ESBVCG for this strategy and we're hopeful DEFRA will support it too

**We assure landowners and farmers of complete confidentiality, professionalism, practicality and awareness of their needs.**



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### Cost questions!!

- Voluntary labour means low-cost but non-labour elements must be covered
- We hope that DEFRA will support us in the HRA as well as Edge
- ... If so, variable costs will be much lower as DEFRA will provide free vaccine, the loan of some key equipment and match-funding of many other costs
- We will offer a flat-rate per intervention so farmer's costs are known in advance – we hope to be able to charge £450 per intervention
- Final cost will depend on whether DEFRA supports our application for BEVS funding

**We'd like your support in influencing DEFRA to include all of Sussex in BEVS**



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### Next steps...

Thanks for listening –  
any questions?

See our website

[sussexbadgervac.co.uk](http://sussexbadgervac.co.uk)

Contact Trevor or Kate  
for a no-obligation chat

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Kate: 01323 870483

