



From the Minister

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PRIME MINISTER

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD  
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH

Prime Minister:<sup>(1)</sup> The Lord President has been consulted and is also content.

Agree that the Minister should announce a review with the terms of reference at X and the 3 April 1984

Yes. no

membership at Y?

DMS  
5/4

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS AND BADGERS - REVIEW OF POLICY

We need to agree on the timing, nature and scope of a review of the policy on bovine tuberculosis and badgers and the membership of the review team.

The current policy for the control of bovine tuberculosis in cattle includes the control of the disease in badgers which form a wildlife reservoir in certain areas. This policy has been a focus of public controversy since its inception in 1975. The level of controversy has been much lower since trapping replaced gassing as the main method of badger control in 1982.

In September 1979 Peter Walker asked Lord Zuckerman as President of the Zoological Society of London to take an objective look at the problem and to advise about the way it should be tackled in the future. Lord Zuckerman's findings (which endorsed the policy) and his recommendations were made public at the end of October 1980. Peter Walker accepted all his recommendations and one of these was that an overall review of the policy should be conducted at the end of three years and its results published with its focus on the changes in the prevalence rate of tuberculosis in badgers as well as on the numbers of herd breakdowns.

Although it could be argued that the change in the main method of badger control signalled a new phase in the policy and that the three year period should start again from that change - ie mid-1982 - I favour the more straightforward approach that the calendar years 1981, 1982 and 1983 should be taken as the three years after which the recommended review should take place. While the change in method of control led to some revision of the detailed arrangements for badger removal operations the fundamental policy is unchanged. It is also the case that the public would expect a review in 1984 and might draw the wrong conclusions if it were postponed. Preliminary soundings indicate that the Consultative Panel on Badgers and Tuberculosis, an advisory panel comprised of

/representatives ....

representatives of scientific, veterinary and conservation societies and individual experts would not support delaying the review.

As far as the scope of the review is concerned the simplest approach would be to frame the terms of reference on the basis of Lord Zuckerman's recommendation for such a review. This would have the merit of following his advice closely and of avoiding the controversy which more detailed terms of reference would risk arousing in one quarter or another; and it might also help to avoid duplication of much of Lord Zuckerman's report. However, there could be criticism that in focusing on changes in the situation since Lord Zuckerman's review, this review was being restricted in a way that Lord Zuckerman's was not.

I therefore propose that the review should have the following terms of reference -

X | "To conduct an overall review of the problem of dealing with badgers infected with bovine tuberculosis insofar as it affects the eradication of the disease in cattle, taking into account changes in field and research work since Lord Zuckerman reported on the problem in 1980."

On this occasion I consider that a three man team should be appointed to conduct the review. Neither a group of officials from the Agriculture Departments nor members of the Consultative Panel would meet the need for a fresh independent look at the problem and would be attacked by critics of our present policy. A single appointment could lead to criticism on the lines of that which followed Lord Zuckerman's review, for example that the single person conducting the review did not have an open mind on the subject and that equal weight was not given to all interests. Moreover, the individual concerned could well become the target of personal abuse as Lord Zuckerman was.

Given the nature of the subject, I believe that the Chairman should be an eminent scientist, preferably a biologist. One member should be a veterinary surgeon, able to appreciate the problems of disease eradication. The third member should both understand agriculture and be able to weigh up the costs and benefits of the various policy options that may be exposed. Hence an agricultural economist is indicated. All members should be able to tolerate some hostile criticism given that the subject is one raising considerable emotion in some quarters. I have the following in mind:-

Chairman - Sir James Beament (62) Drapers' Professor of Agriculture and Head of the Department of Applied Biology, University of Cambridge;

Veterinary member - Mr D M Jones - Director (Zoos), Zoological Society of London;

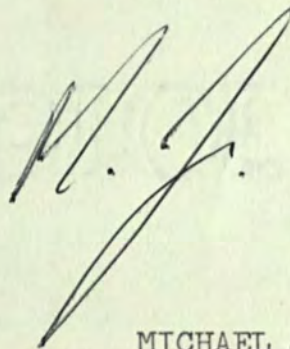
Agricultural Economist member - Professor J P McInerney  
(42), Professor of Agricultural Economics, University  
of Exeter.

None of these has been approached.

Not only will this enquiry be delicate, involving the exploration between economic and conservation interests but its recommendations as to future policy on the issue could have substantial financial implications for the Government and possibly also for trade in live cattle with other EC Member States. It is hoped that the period from the beginning of the enquiry to the submission of the report will be less than twelve months. It is certain that the conduct of the review and the publication of the report will excite further public and media interest in the subject but my judgement is that we have no alternative but to proceed with the plan which I have outlined above.

Subject to your approval I propose to announce the terms of reference and the composition of the review team to Parliament. The announcement would be made jointly with the Secretary of State for Wales as the problem of TB badgers extends to Wales.

I have consulted the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Wales and the Chief Whip and I am copying this minute to them, and to Sir Robert Armstrong. All would be content for such an announcement to be made.



MICHAEL JOPLING

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cc: HMT  
WO  
CWO  
CO  
LPO

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

9 April, 1984

Bovine Tuberculosis and Badgers

The Prime Minister considered over the weekend your Minister's minute of 30 April proposing the announcement of a review of policy on bovine tuberculosis and badgers.

The Prime Minister is content for your Minister to proceed with such an announcement. She agrees the draft terms of reference included in his letter; that Sir James Beament should be invited to chair the review; and that Mr. Jones and Professor McInerney should be approached about membership.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the recipients of yours, and also to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office).

DAVID BARCLAY

Ivor Llewelyn, Esq.,  
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

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