

Within the past 12 months, AFBI's Veterinary Sciences Division (VSD) has continued to carry out a "road traffic accident survey" of badgers for tuberculosis (TB).

These surveys have been carried out by VSD for DARD since the 1970s. In these surveys, badgers killed on roads throughout Northern Ireland are reported to DARD staff by members of the public, collected by DARD, and submitted to VSD for examination for TB. Tests currently carried out on submitted carcasses include post-mortem examinations, bacteriological culture for TB-causing organisms and molecular typing of any such isolates made.

Where AFBI does not hold the information requested by you, it has applied regulation 12 (4)(a) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). This means that AFBI does not hold the information at the time of the request".

For ease of reference I have listed the AFBI response below to the various details you sought in your letter.

- ***The stated aims of the plan or project and any stated hypotheses.***

The aims of the study are to assess the distribution of TB in badgers in Northern Ireland and to determine any association between infection in road-kill badger carcasses and TB in cattle herds. Following submission of the badger carcasses to the VSD, post-mortem examination, bacteriological culture for TB-causing organisms and molecular typing of any such isolates are carried out.

- ***Full details of the survey methodology employed to establish and analyse baseline population data.***

Population data are not being investigated as part of the current road traffic accident survey. Regulation 12(4) of the EIR therefore applies.

- ***The total number of animals to be trapped, tested and released.***

No animals are trapped as part of this study.

- ***The total number of animals to be trapped and killed.***

None.

- ***The methods proposed for the selection, trapping, sedation and killing of animals.***

There is no selection, trapping, sedation and killing of animals in this road traffic accident survey.

- ***Details of all proposed pre-mortem and non-lethal veterinary tests to be performed on each animal.***

No pre-mortem/non-lethal veterinary tests have or are being performed as part of this survey.

- ***Details of all proposed post-mortem veterinary tests to be performed on each animal.***

Tests currently carried out on submitted carcasses include post-mortem examinations, bacteriological culture for TB-causing organisms and molecular typing of any such isolates made.

- ***The proposed start and end dates for all field-based and laboratory-based activity.***

This is an on-going survey

- ***The anticipated timeframe for data analysis, reporting and publication.***

AFBI only undertakes the laboratory aspects of this study. The reporting and publication is the responsibility of DARD.

- ***The details of any applications for licenses or consents to take and/or kill badgers from the wild for the purposes of scientific research in Northern Ireland submitted by or on behalf of AFBI or any contracted third party to any government department or agency in Northern Ireland and the details of any such licenses or consents granted or refused.***

None is required as the survey is based on examination of badgers killed in road traffic accidents. Therefore, the institute does not hold the information at the time of the request.

- ***Full budget proposals and the anticipated public expenditure on each such project.***

The total laboratory cost of this road traffic accident survey for the year 2009/10 was £36,104.