



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, Amgylchedd a
Materion Gwledig](#)

[The Climate Change, Environment and Rural
Affairs Committee](#)

14/12/2016

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o'r Cyfarfod
Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public
from the Meeting

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd. Lle y mae cyfranwyr wedi darparu cywiriadau i'w tystiolaeth, nodir y rheini yn y trawsgrifiad.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included. Where contributors have supplied corrections to their evidence, these are noted in the transcript.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Jayne Bryant	Llafur
Bywgraffiad Biography	Labour
Sian Gwenllian	Plaid Cymru
Bywgraffiad Biography	The Party of Wales
Vikki Howells	Llafur
Bywgraffiad Biography	Labour
Huw Irranca-Davies	Llafur
Bywgraffiad Biography	Labour
David Melding	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig
Bywgraffiad Biography	Welsh Conservatives
Jenny Rathbone	Llafur
Bywgraffiad Biography	Labour
Mark Reckless	UKIP Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor)
Bywgraffiad Biography	UKIP Wales (Committee Chair)
Simon Thomas	Plaid Cymru
Bywgraffiad Biography	The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Yr Athro/Professor	Prif Fildedyg Cymru
Christianne Glossop	Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales
Lesley Griffiths	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig) Assembly Member, Labour (the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs)
Martin Williams	Pennaeth yr Uned Biotechnoleg ac Iechyd Planhigion Head of Plant Health and Bio-Technology Unit

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Martha Da Gama	Ail Glerc
Howells	Second Clerk
Rhys Morgan	Dirprwy Glerc
	Deputy Clerk
Wendy Dodds	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil
	Research Service

Katie Wyatt

Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol
Legal Adviser

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 11:32.
The meeting began at 11:32.*

Twbercwlosis Buchol—Craffu ar Waith Llywodraeth Cymru Bovine Tuberculosis—Scrutiny of the Welsh Government

[1] **Mark Reckless:** Could I just ask your team to introduce themselves for the record?

[2] **Professor Glossop:** I'm Christianne Glossop and I'm the Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales.

[3] **Mr Williams:** I'm Martin Williams and I head up the plant health and environmental protection team.

[4] **Mark Reckless:** Thank you. Cabinet Secretary, when you launched your consultation, following your statement in the Siambr, you said that this is the appropriate time to take stock of the current measures and consider new and enhanced methods of combating the disease in order to develop the next phase of the TB eradication programme. How is that consultation process going so far?

[5] **Lesley Griffiths:** Thank you, Chair, and I welcome the opportunity to refer to that straight away. We are now three quarters of the way through our 12-week consultation on the refreshed TB eradication programme. I have to say that I'm a little disappointed that, up until last weekend, we've only had 18 responses in. I know that you do tend to get a bit of rush at the end, but of course, with Christmas, I did think that we would have had more responses than 18. It's such an important issue and you can imagine that many people raise it with me when I'm on visits, in particular, so I do think that's low.

[6] If I could also take this opportunity to clarify and clear up any confusion about one element in particular that, again, has been raised with me on visits since I launched the consultation. The committee will have noted that there are between 60 and 70 long-term breakdowns of herds in Wales. I announced that we intend to develop bespoke action plans for each long-term-breakdown herd. That was going to be developed in partnership with

the farm, the vet and with the Animal and Plant Health Agency. Not all of those long-term breakdowns will involve badgers and wildlife. So, I suggested in my oral statement that we should learn from the pilot in Northern Ireland, where they cage-trap badgers and humanely kill infected groups of badgers. In practice, that would amount to a targeted cull of those infected groups of badgers. I'm particularly keen to hear from stakeholders on that aspect of our approach.

[7] The consultation covers a broad range of proposals and a key focus of our refreshed programme is regionalisation. We're not consulting on that concept because that's based on evidence. I'm keen, again, to receive views on the measures we apply. There's a question on the consultation where you can put forward views even on areas that we're not consulting on. I think it's really critical that we get that right from the outset. So, again, that's a message that I would like to get out there about the consultation in the remaining three weeks.

[8] In the areas, the epidemiological evidence suggests that bought-in cattle are a primary source of new infection and pre-movement testing reduces, but does not eliminate this risk, because cattle can become infected after being tested, or maybe they could be at an early stage of infection, and that would be too early then to be picked up by the test. So, that's why farmers should always consider the health risks when sourcing stock. Herds with a history of TB are around four times more likely to have a new incident than herds with no history of the disease. And buying cattle from these herds represents more of a risk than buying cattle from herds that have never had TB.

[9] So, if we are going to eradicate TB, farmers need to take greater responsibility for managing the risk from brought-in cattle. And that's why we're consulting on the concept of a mandatory informed purchasing system, to ensure that cattle keepers are able to find out the information on the disease status that they need at the point of sale.

[10] So, as I say, we're three weeks away from the end of the consultation. Once we get all the responses in—and I do hope we do have more in the final three weeks—officials will then draw up a revised programme. And then I intend to publish a refreshed TB eradication programme, and the measures will hopefully be introduced by April of next year.

[11] **Mark Reckless:** Thank you, Cabinet Secretary. You mentioned to me, in

advance of a previous session we had, the progress of the consultation, and I did take the opportunity of having the farmers' unions in to emphasise the importance of their members responding, even if it wasn't a full response to every question, rather than only relying on the, no doubt, comprehensive response that the two main unions will make. I note you're not consulting on regionalisation. We have questioned a number of witnesses around that, and I think that everyone we spoke to seemed to think that was the way forward, and a positive approach. So, at least our response to that has been positive.

[12] **Lesley Griffiths:** Yes. I visited a livestock market, either a week last Monday or a fortnight last Monday, I can't remember, and that was a very hot topic, if you like, and people were generally very supportive of the regionalisation approach.

[13] **Mark Reckless:** Can I follow up on a question I asked you in the Siamb immediately after your statement? It relates to your ruling out an English-style cull and just understanding what it is that you mean by 'an English-style cull', and what sort of factors about how that's been done are the things you wouldn't want to see in Wales.

[14] **Lesley Griffiths:** Well, I thought it was very important to get that message out—that we were ruling out an English-style cull. And, I suppose, by that I mean culling including the free shooting of badgers undertaken by farmers under licence, which is, obviously, what happens in England. There's been a huge amount of analysis of the data following the first two years of culling that took place in Gloucester and Somerset, and there were no statistically significant differences in incident rates between both the combined cull areas and their combined comparison areas, or between the combined cull buffers and their combined comparison buffer areas, across all reporting periods.

[15] But I suppose the main evidence comes following the randomised badger culling trial that took place earlier this century—that's sounds weird, but you know what I mean—which I'll ask Christianne to come in on in a bit. So, if you look at the analysis of that, and then the analysis of our six years of programme cattle controls, we've got 39 per cent reduction in confirmed incidents. And if you compare that to the analysis of the randomised badger cull trial, you can see that we are making real progress. But I'll ask Christianne to say a bit more about that.

[16] **Professor Glossop:** Thank you, yes. And, of course, the randomised

badger culling trial is bound to come up in these discussions, and, just in case anybody wants to see it, it's here. This was published in 2007. I think the first frustration for me is that it's entitled 'Bovine TB: The Scientific Evidence'. It implies that there is no other evidence up to that date that is of value. And I would suggest to you that, although it was a very ambitious, expensive trial, and it has been analysed, shall I say, thoroughly, it was not delivered exactly according to protocol, because it was interrupted in 2001 as a result of foot and mouth disease and, in fact, the Minister has already given you some of the figures out of the study on proactive culling. But, listening to this committee, and the evidence you've received, I've noted there's quite a lot of criticism of what is perceived to be the reactive cull that we are talking about, on individual farms. And I think it's worth just pointing out that we are not proposing that at all.

[17] If you look at the detail of the reactive culling element of the randomised badger culling trial, the approach is completely different. Areas were designated as a reactive cull zone at random, and every farm in that area that had a TB breakdown that was confirmed was treated with a badger cull, regardless of whether badgers were anything to do with the disease problem on that farm. The cull happened one year only, over eight nights. It was never repeated. Although the study was set to run this particular part of the project for five years, there isn't one area within any of the triplets that had the treatment for more than four years. In fact, only one had four years of treatment. Most of them had far less. One of them had no reactive culling at all. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about veterinary epidemiological evidence, looking at individual farms, trying to understand and demonstrate proof that badgers are either part of that problem or, indeed, not part of that problem, and then dealing with that component thoroughly rather than incompletely, as happened in the RBCT.

[18] **Mark Reckless:** In light of that, can I just try and understand the scope of what you may potentially do in response to the consultation? I'm clear that you rule out English-style culls, and you've referred to the farmers doing the shooting under licence. You may consider the Northern Ireland type of trapping and killing just the infected badgers. What I'm less clear on—and Christianne's answer helps to an extent—is, sort of, in between those, are you willing to contemplate culling, including potentially shooting—although, possibly, by epidemiologists and not by farmers under licence—in particular areas, particularly in light of the evidence we've heard about hard borders? Are you ruling out any possibility of the shooting of badgers in any areas, even with scientifically controlled conditions and hard boundaries, or is that

something you may consider in light of the consultation responses?

[19] **Lesley Griffiths:** No, I'm not considering that. Again, we go back to those bespoke action plans. What I have set out is based on the Northern Ireland project. I spoke to the Minister on Monday. We were all at the fisheries council in Brussels together. I'm very keen to see the outcomes of it because, obviously, it was a pilot, but that is what I am proposing to do within the bespoke action plans, where it can be proven that badgers or wildlife are responsible.

[20] **Mark Reckless:** David.

[21] **David Melding:** Thank you, Chair. Good morning, Cabinet Secretary.

[22] **Lesley Griffiths:** Good morning.

[23] **David Melding:** Can I just start with a sort of European dimension? Your stated objective is to eradicate TB, which is widely supported, I think, by all political parties and all interested parties in Wales. Currently, we're spending about £7.5 million per year. Is that adequate if we're really going to see a proper eradication programme? Of that £7.5 million, roughly a third comes from European sources at the moment. So, what's going to happen when those sources are no longer available, given that an eradication programme can last up to 40 years if we look at international comparisons?

[24] **Lesley Griffiths:** I actually thought that the EU funding was about 10 per cent of what we spend currently on the TB eradication programme.

[25] **Professor Glossop:** Yes.

[26] **Lesley Griffiths:** So, we'll have to find that, obviously, because we will need to continue. I think you're absolutely right: it's everybody's ambition that I speak to to have a TB-free Wales.

[27] **David Melding:** The shortfall would have to be met and, obviously, the programme implies—

[28] **Lesley Griffiths:** But I think it's only about 10 per cent.

[29] **David Melding:** Yes. We have a figure of between £2 million and £3 million of the £7.5 million coming from Europe, which is, obviously, 30 per

cent or 40 per cent.

[30] **Professor Glossop:** If I could just—

[31] **Simon Thomas:** Does that figure include compensation?

[32] **Professor Glossop:** No, it doesn't; that's what I was going to clarify. The TB programme, the total cost, is closer to—well, the 10 per cent, £2.7 million we claimed last year—it's closer to £27 million. And you're absolutely right; there's the TB programme and the additional measures, there's all the testing that comes out of another budget, and then there's the compensation. That adds up to that £27 million.

[33] **David Melding:** Okay. It would be quite useful, I think, to have the combined figures.

[34] **Lesley Griffiths:** Would you like me to send a note?

[35] **David Melding:** Yes, that would be helpful. I then want to return to issues about the current protection that we get, in effect, because we're part of the European Union. Other countries can't really take any action against us on the basis of restricting trade using our TB status. Are you confident that that type of free trading that doesn't use the fact that we do have TB areas is not going to be used by those who basically want to restrict trade and take a very severe advantage of our current condition?

11:45

[36] **Lesley Griffiths:** Certainly, early discussions don't lead me to believe that it will be an issue. I know it is something that has been used against us, if you like, but I have had discussions around this and it's something I will keep a close eye on. We're not the only country, obviously, with TB.

[37] **David Melding:** Yes. We did ask an expert from New Zealand. I mean, it was only one expert, but he seemed to indicate something similar, that New Zealand had not—. During its period when TB was a real factor in their herds, it didn't seem to have had an effect on red meat export, but it's an area that needs careful monitoring, I think.

[38] You've referred twice to the Northern Ireland TVR programme, and I just put it to you—. We've already heard from the British Veterinary

Association that it's simply not intense enough to really be effective, in their view, and it's not likely to be a model that would be useful for us. Presumably, Christianne Glossop has already had sight of that evidence, because they very extensively have been disseminating it, both in committee and at events outside committee. What's your response?

[39] **Lesley Griffiths:** I don't think it was intended to provide a wide-scale benefit; I think it's the cattle controls that are achieving this. Officials have been out and visited to have a look at the scheme. As I say, I've had discussions with Michelle McIlveen, the Minister, about it, and I just think it's one tool that we can use within those bespoke action plans, if that's what's agreed between the partners that I referred to, in the chronic long-term herds. We know that our top-10—that sounds awful—long-term chronic herds have cost us £6 million. That's just in monetary terms; there are lots of other issues around why it's completely unacceptable to have those long-term breakdowns. So, as I say, I think they've certainly delivered it in a very good way, the pilot, and I'm really looking forward to seeing the results when they are available.

[40] **David Melding:** Okay. So, you're awaiting the further evidence and you're sceptical about the BVA's approach in terms of—

[41] **Lesley Griffiths:** Do you want to say anything?

[42] **Professor Glossop:** I was just going to add that we're not just waiting for the results of that study. I meet the Chief Veterinary Officer for Northern Ireland every single month. I've been over to provide evidence to their TB committee, their investigation; we've shared modelling outputs and we've shared protocols. In fact, when we had out-of-date vaccine that we were not able to use on badgers last year, we supplied that to Northern Ireland, because the work they're doing is regarded as a trial or an experiment, and so they were operating under a different licence and could, perversely, use the vaccine under those circumstances.

[43] We've also taken great interest in the way they're delivering that programme. It's meticulous. They're using very modern technology and they're learning a lot of lessons about the testing of badgers, which we intend to apply to our work.

[44] **Mark Reckless:** David, you had one more question, I think.

[45] **David Melding:** Yes, it's just this issue of compensation. The NFU are very exercised about the fact that you are capping it and that acts as a disincentive for people who want to invest in their herds and genetics and more productive breeding. I just wonder what your initial response to that is.

[46] **Lesley Griffiths:** Some farmers have raised this as a point of concern, but I think we have to recognise that only 1 per cent of cattle valued would've been affected if we'd have had that reduction of compensation in one year. So, I think it was about 92 or 93 cattle that would've actually been outside of that. So, it is quite a small number. But our average compensation payments are 60 per cent higher when we compare them to England. So, that does concern me. I think it's appropriate that, again, it's part of the consultation, so I'm very interested to hear their views.

[47] **David Melding:** It just seems to me that it's not very focused and that you may think you're paying, on average, too much, and that will be for you to establish, but when cattle clearly are worth a lot more, why aren't you compensating farmers for their loss? It seems that you need to come up with a reason that's a bit sharper than the one you've just given, I would say.

[48] **Lesley Griffiths:** Well, you know, as I say, if you look at the number of cattle that would've been outside that £5,000 limit, it was 93. So, it's not a huge number. If farmers believe their cattle are worth more than that, they can insure them. I know that's quite a new market. But, you know, there are steps that they can take to protect themselves, if they think that their cattle are worth more.

[49] **Professor Glossop:** And, interestingly, if I might add, we've had a lot of meeting with stakeholders over the last few weeks while we've been out to consultation, including meetings where members of pedigree breed societies have been present. Now, they're most likely to be affected by that change, and not one of them mentioned that as a problem, and I was really interested then to hear the unions sort of flagging that up is a concern. Of course it's going to affect the people who own those animals, but, overall, it is a very small number of the animals that we're taking, and for every other animal, they're being valued by a valuer and having a proper market value paid, as opposed to the table valuation system that, of course, is in operation in England.

[50] **David Melding:** The flip side, of course, is that, if it is a small number and the costs are modest, then you're taking action that could reduce the

incentive to be more productive and that is not good for—.

[51] **Lesley Griffiths:** Looking at those 93, that equated to £300,000. You know, that's a lot of money, and that's the taxpayers' money. So, I think we need to make sure that we're not getting overvaluations, for instance. So, let's see; it's part of the consultation and we'll see what comes back.

[52] **David Melding:** Thank you. Because with those animals, they're not being overvalued; I think they're not going to get the market rate, are they? That's the issue. You see, I don't think you can combine those two things.

[53] **Lesley Griffiths:** I see what you're saying.

[54] **David Melding:** You can say, 'All right, we drive towards market values'. Well, that's fine, but, you know, the market value of some cattle obviously is a lot higher if they're prize breeding bulls.

[55] **Mark Reckless:** Well, we'll see what you say—

[56] **Lesley Griffiths:** As I say, they could insure—you know, farmers could insure.

[57] **David Melding:** Okay.

[58] **Mark Reckless:** We'll see what you say following the consultation. Vikki.

[59] **Vikki Howells:** Thank you, Chair, and good morning, Cabinet Secretary.

[60] **Lesley Griffiths:** Morning, Vikki.

[61] **Vikki Howells:** I'd like to go back to the issue of badger vaccination. We know that, previously, the Welsh Government has done some really groundbreaking work around this, and we understand, obviously, that there's no vaccine currently available globally, but you have made reference to the fact that, if it becomes re-available, you will look to use it as part of your refresh strategy. Some of the witnesses that we have had into committee within the last few weeks have suggested that there isn't enough evidence to support a link between vaccination and a reduction of bovine TB in cattle. How would you respond to that?

[62] **Lesley Griffiths:** We are keeping a close watching brief on the supply of badger vaccine, but we know it's unlikely we're going to have any supply before 2018, and certainly not in 2017. But, you know, I do see a role for future use, because, again, if you look at the analysis that was done following our vaccination programme—even though it was interrupted, we did have four years—I think it's something that we should look at as part of the programme. We can't make a decision until we have a much clearer picture on whether there are going to be future supplies. So, that's why we are looking at alternative sources, to see if there's anything out there, but I don't think we've got any further information on that.

[63] **Professor Glossop:** We don't, but in terms of what evidence did we use to go out and look at vaccination, it's true there is no evidence from a large-scale field trial of the use of vaccine in badgers. That's why we did it. We were using evidence from a smaller study in Gloucestershire, which was published by Chambers et al. in 2010, which demonstrated that vaccination of badgers—I'll have to read this, because it's a really complicated sentence—demonstrating that vaccination of badgers that were uninfected prior to being vaccinated led to a 74 per cent reduction in the incidence of new cases in the vaccinated group. So, that's the evidence base, but that doesn't tell us what effect that would have on TB in cattle, and the best evidence we've got there is really scientific opinion from the science review that a previous Minister commissioned a few years ago, where a group of experts said that it's logical to assume that there would be benefit over time and that there would be a consequent benefit to cattle of vaccinating badgers. But we don't have that evidence. Sometimes, you have to go and get the evidence yourself, which, of course, is what Ireland is doing.

[64] **Lesley Griffiths:** Yes.

[65] **Vikki Howells:** Thank you. So, in terms of the scientific opinion, then, you would argue that Wales should continue to play a lead and be at the forefront of that if the opportunity arises.

[66] **Lesley Griffiths:** Yes, absolutely. As I say, I very much would see it as having a role in any future programme, if it became available.

[67] **Vikki Howells:** Thank you. And if it did become available, or re-available, would you have a view as to where its use might be most applicable? For instance, would it be in the previous intensive action area in Pembrokeshire, or in a different area, or is it too soon to say?

[68] **Lesley Griffiths:** I think it probably is too soon to say. It would really depend on when it became available and what the situation was.

[69] **Vikki Howells:** Thank you.

[70] **Mark Reckless:** Could I bring in Jayne?

[71] **Jayne Bryant:** Thank you, Chair. Good morning, Cabinet Secretary.

[72] **Lesley Griffiths:** Good morning, Jayne.

[73] **Jayne Bryant:** What are your views on the importance that biosecurity measures can play in helping to prevent bovine TB, particularly through cattle and wildlife, such as via slurry on pasture land?

[74] **Lesley Griffiths:** The *M. bovis* is capable of surviving in the environment for extended amounts of time. Obviously it can be transmitted either through direct, close contact between infected and susceptible individuals or indirectly, from exposure to viable bacteria in a contaminated environment—so, that's housing, feed, pasture—and direct transmission via the respiratory route. I think the relative contribution of each route has not been quantified, but I think most people agree that direct contact is likely to be more significant than transmission through indirect routes, I think I'm right in saying. I'm looking at Christianne.

[75] **Professor Glossop:** Well, certainly direct contact is a good way of spreading TB if you've got two infected animals and one of them is shedding *Mycobacterium bovis*. But there has been a lot of focus recently, of course, on the environmental contamination, and I think Rosie Woodroffe explained some of that to you—the very interesting work she's been doing on looking at cattle–badger interactions at pasture. It's quite rare, but clearly they live on the same land and so they can be contaminating each other that way. Looking at slurry and the treatment of slurry is just one piece of the biosecurity package, and that's why we believe that each farm needs to have its own biosecurity protocol and that the private vet needs to be involved in that, because they can understand the risk factors, really.

[76] **Lesley Griffiths:** When I came into portfolio and was looking at this, there were very limited data around cattle faeces, for instance. But we know that, in slurry, it can live for up to about six months.

[77] **Jayne Bryant:** Okay, brilliant. Thank you. We've had different evidence around the perturbation effect within the English culls. What are your views on this?

[78] **Lesley Griffiths:** Again, officials I know have had regular contact with colleagues in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs around that. At our request, we've had a 2 km buffer around the areas that are having culls. We don't know where those areas are. They haven't been disclosed. But we requested that there was that buffer of 2 km. I know you have a view of perturbation, Christianne.

[79] **Professor Glossop:** Yes, and again, referring to this report, the independent scientific group report, they lean heavily on the theory of perturbation to explain some of the effects of increased TB incidence surrounding a cull zone. Indeed, it was one of the reasons, they argued, they would stop the reactive culling that I've already described earlier, because they felt there were problems in the surrounding herds, and they kind of blamed that on perturbation. It is a theory. It is reasonable to assume that, in populations of wildlife that are very territorial, like badgers, if you remove some, there may be some mixing of populations, because the badgers that were defending their boundary aren't there anymore to defend it. So, badgers move around.

[80] But my personal view is that an awful lot emphasis has been placed on perturbation, but, because there is evidence there, or suggested evidence there, that's exactly why, as the Minister said, we have requested that no cull zone in England comes within 2 km of the border with Wales, because we don't want to have a problem at that border.

[81] **Jayne Bryant:** So the BVA, I think, suggested that there should be close co-operation between Welsh Government and the UK Government on this to stop perturbation. That's already happening.

[82] **Lesley Griffiths:** Yes.

[83] **Mark Reckless:** Can I bring in Sian, Simon and then Huw? Sian.

[84] **Sian Gwenllian:** Ie, jest ar y **Sian Gwenllian:** Yes, on that point pwynt yna ynglŷn â'r aflonyddu a allai about the perturbation that could ddigwydd yn Lloegr yn sgil eu happen in England because of their

polisiau nhw ac effaith hynny wedyn ar Gymru. Daethom ni i ddeall gan DEFRA fod yna drafodaeth barhaol yn digwydd rhyngddyn nhw a Llywodraeth Cymru ar hyn ac eich bod chi'n ymwybodol, neu mi fyddwch chi'n ymwybodol, pan fydd unrhyw *cull* yn digwydd ar y ffin.

policies and the impact of that on Wales. We understood from DEFRA that there was a continuous discussion happening between them and the Welsh Government on this and that you were aware, or you will be aware, when any cull does happen on the border.

12:00

[85] Ac maen nhw wedi dweud wrthym ni ar hyn o bryd nad oes yna ddim difa yn digwydd ar y ffin. Dyna'r dystiolaeth a gawsom ni yn y pwyllgor yn fan hyn. Ai dyna eich profiad chi?

And you're they've told us that, at the moment, there aren't any culls happening on the border. That's the evidence that we've had in the committee here. Is that your experience, therefore?

[86] **Lesley Griffiths:** Well, as I said, the cull areas haven't been disclosed, but officials do work very closely. Shall I ask Christianne?

[87] **Professor Glossop:** No, we haven't seen all the maps; they're not publicly available. But, we are in direct contact with DEFRA and Natural England, who are issuing the licences, and they have clear instructions that they will not cull within 2 km of the border with Wales. So that's the assurance I've got. Obviously, I have some kind of local knowledge of some of those areas, and that's my experience, too.

[88] **Sian Gwenllian:** Océ. Yn y pwyllgor, roedd DEFRA yn awgrymu bod y lefel o wybodaeth sy'n cael ei rhannu yn fwy na hynny. Roedden nhw'n awgrymu mai chi fyddai'r cyntaf i wybod, mewn ffordd, petai yna fwriad i ddifa yn agos i'r ffin, boed 2 km neu beth bynnag, felly. Roeddwn i jest eisiau—. Nid oeddech chi cweit yn dweud yr un peth â nhw yn fanna.

Sian Gwenllian: Okay. In the committee, DEFRA suggested that the level of information that is shared is more than that. They suggested that you would be the first to know, in a way, if there was an intention to cull close to the border, whether it was 2 km or whatever. I just wanted—. You're not saying exactly the same thing as them, there.

[89] **Lesley Griffiths:** Okay. Did they mention the 2 km buffer?

[90] **Sian Gwenllian:** No.

[91] **Lesley Griffiths:** Okay, well, I think Christianne needs to have an urgent conversation with DEFRA officials to clarify that, and I'd be very happy, Chair, to send a note following that discussion, because my understanding is they will not come—. That buffer was there at our request, of that 2 km, so I think we need assurance that they won't break that buffer, but also if they said to you that we'd be the first to know, then we need to find out why we're not the first to know, because we definitely haven't had that information disclosed to us.

[92] **Professor Glossop:** No, we haven't, and it's not a question of just being first to know; we can't let it happen. So, I don't want to be told it's happening; we need to make sure it doesn't.

[93] **Lesley Griffiths:** So we'll send a note once Christianne has had that conversation.

[94] **Sian Gwenllian:** Diolch.

[95] **Mark Reckless:** Thank you very much. Simon.

[96] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch. Gwnaf **Simon Thomas:** Thank you. I want to droi at ddau beth arall. Yn gyntaf oll, turn to a couple of other things. First yn y dystiolaeth—nid wyf yn gwybod of all, in the evidence—I'm not sure os cawsoch chi gyfle i weld y whether you had the opportunity to dystiolaeth gan DEFRA wythnos see the evidence from DEFRA last diwethaf, ond ar y pwynt o week, but on the point about aflonyddu, roedden nhw'n dweud perturbation, they were saying that bod eich cynigion chi yn yr your proposals in the consultation to ymgynghoriad i ddifa, os o gwbl, cull, if at all, in specific areas and mew'n ardaloedd penodol a ffermydd farms where there was a link between penodol yn wir, lle mae yna gyswllt cattle and badgers, was likely to penodol rhwng moch daear a cause worse perturbation than the gwartheg, yn debygol o achosi approaches that they're taking in gwaeth aflonyddu na'r dulliau sydd England of culling over a very broad ganddyn nhw yn Lloegr o ddifa dros area. So I would just like to have on ardal eang iawn. Byddwn i jest yn record your response to that leicio ei gael ar gofnod beth yw eich assertion. ymateb chi i'r honiad yna.

[97] **Lesley Griffiths:** Well, I'm quite surprised they gave those views, because I certainly wouldn't comment on DEFRA's policy. I made that decision after my many conversations with Christianne about the long-term herd breakdowns, and why we would do that. And having spent the summer looking at Northern Ireland's pilot—officials went out to Northern Ireland—. On that specific point, I'll ask Christianne to come in on her view of it.

[98] **Professor Glossop:** Yes, thank you, Minister. So, the evidence on which DEFRA are basing that view is the reactive component of the randomised badger culling trial, which, as I've already indicated, was incomplete and interrupted. It was also stopped early because they were worried that this is what was happening. There is no evidence of that, and we are not proposing to do things in the same way as the protocol for the randomised badger culling trial. So, I can't tell you what will happen; we haven't done it yet, but we are devising our approach to maximise the benefit and minimise any potential disbenefit of that intervention.

[99] **Simon Thomas:** Is there any evidence yet from Northern Ireland, where they are culling infected badgers?

[100] **Professor Glossop:** No.

[101] **Simon Thomas:** There's no evidence yet.

[102] **Professor Glossop:** No, there's no evidence.

[103] **Simon Thomas:** Either way.

[104] **Professor Glossop:** No. And I would suggest to you we can't sit and wait for the five years of that programme to decide what to do. Once again, when there's a lack of evidence, you have to tread carefully, basing what you plan to do on any evidence available and professional expert opinion, and that's exactly what we're doing, and we'll monitor it carefully.

[105] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch am hynny. Ar bwnc arall, gwahanol, ond i fynd yn ôl at y pwynt roedd Jayne Bryant wedi ei godi, sef rheolaeth slyri, mae nifer o ffermydd bellach—ffermydd godro yn arbennig—sydd **Simon Thomas:** Thank you for that. On a different subject, but returning to the point that Jayne Bryant raised, which is the management of slurry, there are many farms now—dairy farms in particular—that are

yn cynhyrchu mwy o slyri nag y producing more slurry than they can
 medran nhw ei daenu dros eu tir eu spread out over their own land, over
 hunain, dros y ddaear ei hun. Yn ôl the ground itself. As I understand it,
 beth rwy'n deall, mae'n dal yn bosibl it's still possible to remove slurry
 mynd â slyri oddi ar fferm sydd from a farm that's been infected by
 wedi'i heintio gyda dicáu gwartheg a bovine TB and spread that slurry on
 lledaenu'r slyri hwnnw ar ddaear another farm's land. Is that
 fferm arall. A ydy hynny'n rhywbeth something that you're considering or
 rydych yn ei ystyried neu'n edrych looking at during this process?
 arno yn ystod y broses yma?

[106] **Lesley Griffiths:** We are, yes.

[107] **Professor Glossop:** We certainly are, and again it's down to the individual farm and what their practices are. We know that slurry can hold live *Mycobacterium bovis*, depending on the temperature, for a long period. One of the approaches could be—and we do this on some farms—to require them to hold that slurry for that period of time. Of course, there are practical difficulties associated with that, but that's exactly what we do on a farm-by-farm basis.

[108] **Simon Thomas:** So, that aspect of management might arise from this farm-by-farm approach that you're taking.

[109] **Lesley Griffiths:** It happens now in the current programme, but obviously when we're looking at the bespoke action plans, that could be part—

[110] **Simon Thomas:** That's what I was trying to get at, really.

[111] **Lesley Griffiths:** Yes, it could be part of that action.

[112] **Simon Thomas:** Do digesters help with this at all?

[113] **Professor Glossop:** Do digesters help—?

[114] **Simon Thomas:** Yes, do they help break down that bacteria?

[115] **Professor Glossop:** They probably do, but we haven't done that piece of work to actually test that. But that would be reasonable to assume. That's

another opinion rather than sound evidence.

[116] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch.

[117] **Mark Reckless:** I'll bring in Huw, please.

[118] **Huw Irranca-Davies:** I don't want to linger longer on this issue of perturbation but, just to clarify, you were making some strong qualifications about what was in the ISG report about the issues of perturbation. Yet, my understanding was—and I haven't read it for some time; it's not my bedside reading—but my understating was that, exactly as you say, the reason that they called short what they were doing was because they were starting to see evidence in the outlying areas of perturbation. And actually, one of the criticisms of calling it short was that those effects dissipated over time. In fact, if you went back 9 or 10 years later, you could see that the effects—. But there was evidence. You're telling me that there was no evidence of perturbation, effectively, on outlying populations.

[119] **Professor Glossop:** The evidence was that by August 2003, and they started this—. The first reactive cull zone started in May 1999, but they started at different times. But, by then, in the areas they were studying at the time, they saw an increased incidence of TB of 27 per cent over this incomplete approach to culling—you know, not delivered in every area. On that basis, they stopped the cull. That's not evidence of perturbation; that's evidence that the incidence of TB went up to that point.

[120] **Huw Irranca-Davies:** From which they assumed a correlation.

[121] **Professor Glossop:** They assumed a correlation, but there's no proof of that at all.

[122] **Huw Irranca-Davies:** And the correlation hasn't been explained in any other way.

[123] **Professor Glossop:** No, it hasn't—

[124] **Huw Irranca-Davies:** Sorry—the causality cannot be made clear, but have you got a speculation on what else may have caused it?

[125] **Professor Glossop:** Well, as I've explained, they didn't even look at the start as to whether the badgers were anything to do with those individual

breakdowns. So, I would suggest a lot of activity in the area, incomplete testing and all of that. If you look at the figures before they started the reactive culling, you will see that there was an increasing incidence of TB in those areas prior to culling. So, it's very difficult then to ask the question if this was just an extrapolation and that the effect of reactive culling—there was no effect—or was it that the reactive culling was causing the problem. The other thing to bear in mind is that, although there was, on average, a 27 per cent increase in incidence, the 95 per cent confidence interval limit—the range through which statistics were estimated—was between a 2.4 per cent decrease and a 65 per cent increase. That's a massive, massive range. So, to just come up with that number in the middle and then take the decision to stop—. In my opinion, the reactive element—well, you've got my message. I've got concerns about it.

[126] **Huw Irranca-Davies:** That is really fascinating. Chair, I wonder whether I could ask, through your good offices, whether you wanted to put some of that in more detail in a written explanation of your analysis of what is in there subsequently, what we've learnt subsequently and how this might apply to the type of reactive tests that you're doing. I think that would be hugely useful, because I think that moves the argument on quite substantially from where we've been previously. That's not what I wanted to ask you; my apologies.

[127] **Simon Thomas:** Can I just ask one thing, just to clarify completely on this, therefore? Because from what you've just told Huw Irranca-Davies, I just wonder why, then, when the previous Welsh Government, which also had your advice, went for an intensive action area in north Pembrokeshire—initially for a cull but then for vaccination—perturbation and hard borders were part of the evidence for defining that. Now, if you were so sceptical, if I can put it that way, about perturbation, why were hard borders so essential for that area?

[128] **Professor Glossop:** I think we've become more sceptical over the years. If you think about the timing of that, and the fact that the areas—. This book was published in 2007. We've now got six and a half years of analysis following the end of culling—

[129] **Simon Thomas:** Indeed, which DEFRA are also using, yes.

[130] **Professor Glossop:** —which kind of moved it on, but because, at the time, we needed to pass the legal tests required to deliver that approach, we

had to use what was available—the evidence that was available. I think that it was very important for us to then extrapolate from what was available then. The interesting thing is that the disbenefit of culling in the buffer zone—let's call it a buffer zone; the 2 km zone around the cull zones in the RBCT—the disbenefit disappeared over the subsequent years, but the benefit inside the cull zone actually was maintained. It's the same evidence base, but further analysis. I think that's what we'd have to say.

[131] **Mark Reckless:** I'm struggling, Christianne, about what you say, because to compare it to other witnesses we've had, a great deal of emphasis has been put on this perturbation and the effects of culling in the area surrounding it as the reason not to cull, yet the Welsh Government is ruling out culling, at least by shooting, on the basis of what the Cabinet Secretary said to me earlier.

[132] **Professor Glossop:** I think what you're referring to is the large-scale cull zone. What we've said already is that we don't believe that that's necessary in Wales at this time. We've carried out a badger found dead survey for coming onto two years. There are parts of Wales where there are no badgers. There are parts of Wales where there are badgers and TB, but a relatively low incidence of TB in the badgers. Then there are parts of Wales with high TB in the badgers and in the cattle, but even there we have farms— . Even in our highest incidence TB area in Pembrokeshire, one in four farms has TB right now. Now, that's a lamentable figure, but the reverse is also true: three out of four farms don't have TB, and the level of infection is just the same in the badgers across the whole of that area. So, I think that this tailored approach is less damaging. It's actually less contentious. We're having some really good conversations with wildlife groups about this. Again, learning lessons from Northern Ireland, where they've developed a protocol where wildlife groups, veterinary surgeons, politicians and farmers are all sitting together and co-operating, we're trying to base this programme on the best evidence but also on the co-operative approach, rather than confrontation. That's why we have to try and find a way that meets our needs to deal with these long-term breakdowns, which are costing so much money and causing so much heartache, without doing something as drastic as trying to deliver a badger cull across a large swathe of land. We don't have the evidence to support that right now.

[133] **Huw Irranca-Davies:** I said I didn't want to prolong that—[*Laughter.*]—but it's been really useful. You just touched there on less the hard sciences, more the behavioural sciences of working with people. Can I just ask for your

views, going forward, post the consultation, on how you would deliver this, bringing farmers with you? One of the interesting things that we've heard in evidence and that we've read before is that, in places like Australia and New Zealand, where these very overarching approaches to eradication have been taken, part of their success has been the signal involvement and ownership by the farming community. How are you going to do that?

[134] **Lesley Griffiths:** Well, we haven't got a levy, which I know they had in New Zealand. So, they held the purse strings, which I think always focuses the mind. But it's really important that we work with industry members, going forward. I've had lots of discussions since I came into post over the summer, and I know, when we come out of the consultation and we have the new refreshed eradication programme, there will be people who don't think we've gone far enough. I'm hoping there'll be people that recognise what we're really trying to do. Certainly, those are the conversations I've had. We've got the eradication boards; we've got the programme board. It's really important that industry members sit on there. I met with the programme board and I came away with lots more ideas. They really help us. They're a good sounding board for policy, I suppose is right, and it's absolutely right that industry members are on there. We have got a close working relationship, or officials have, with Paul Livingstone, who I know gave you evidence. So, I think it's good that he's been engaged with our programme over a number of years.

12:15

[135] **Professor Glossop:** He certainly has. I've been there to look at their programme; he's been here to critique our programme, and we communicate regularly. We pretty much agree on everything apart from the role of the private veterinary surgeon in the TB equation. His view is that you should put all this work to Government vets, and my view is that we want to make sure we've got a good network of private vets fully engaged in the process. But it's the only thing that Paul and I disagree on. Maybe rugby as well. *[Laughter.]*

[136] **Huw Irranca-Davies:** We'll leave that aside. Just one final question. It again deals with the issue of the involvement of the farming community, and it's on the aspect of risk-based trading practices and the way you'll take this forward in Wales. How do you engage with the farming community on that with livestock markets, with auctioneers and so on? How do you take that forward?

[137] **Lesley Griffiths:** Obviously, officials have discussions with livestock markets and with farmers on an individual basis, but I think if we are going to eradicate TB, farmers have to take greater responsibility, but we have to make sure that they're provided with all the evidence that they need when they're buying in cattle. As I say, I visited Welshpool livestock market. It was the first livestock market I visited and I've got another one planned next month for me to understand how that information is shared. So, up on the board, you know, what's the information coming? I know we have given some funding and I'm looking to see if there's anything else we can support. I suppose my opinion is that, in the longer term, we will need a mandatory system around the provision of that advice, support and information.

[138] **Jenny Rathbone:** So, just going forward, looking at ways in which we can incentivise farmers to do the right thing, I just wanted to pick up on a point you made earlier, Cabinet Secretary, which is that you said that the compensation scheme was 60 per cent higher in England than it is in Wales. I just wondered if that was a perverse incentive for people to buy up cattle in England that have a low value because they are deemed to be a risky buy, and then bringing them to Wales.

[139] **Lesley Griffiths:** I would hope not, but I suppose that's one of the reasons why we need to look at the compensation. But I would hope not.

[140] **Jenny Rathbone:** Okay, because obviously, we're all aware that people move livestock from Wales to England, depending on the season. So, that's something you might look at when you're looking at the amount of compensation.

[141] **Lesley Griffiths:** Yes. As I say, I think farmers, individually, have to take greater responsibility, but I also recognise that we have to make sure that they have access to the best information around what they are buying in.

[142] **Jenny Rathbone:** Are there ways that you think we could incentivise farmers to adopt good practice, given that, at the moment, the consultation seems to focus on the financial penalties, such as reducing CAP payments for non-compliance?

[143] **Lesley Griffiths:** Alongside the consultation, just a couple of weeks ago, I launched the cattle health certification standard health scheme, and that was along with England. So, I think that's again, within—. If you have a

farmer who's got that scheme in a high TB area, for instance, maybe they could be exempt from having a test every six months, which I know, in relation to the regionalisation, is an issue that some farmers have raised with me; they don't really want to be tested every six months. I think it's probably necessary, but again, we'll see what comes forward. So, if they are part of that scheme, to me, that's incentivisation.

[144] **Jenny Rathbone:** The other point I wanted to just try and tie down was: as well as having regionalisation, which there seems to be general approval of, we seem to have had pretty universal agreement amongst all our witnesses that cattle in large herds are more at risk than cattle in small herds. I just wondered whether you had considered any way of having a differential, based on the risk, where we're working with mainly large dairy herds versus cattle that are been prepared for meat, up on the uplands et cetera.

[145] **Lesley Griffiths:** I haven't. I don't know if officials have looked at it.

[146] **Professor Glossop:** We certainly recognise that large herds are more of a problem, and, if we look at those long-term breakdown herds, in the main they are large complex herds, multi-site operations. And so that makes life very difficult and, if you have an explosion of TB, it can be very costly to everybody concerned. However, I think there are other risk factors as well, and that's where these individual plans and the role of the vet will become very important. There's a different discussion to be had about whether or not anyone should try and limit the size of a herd—that's a business decision—but the important question is: what are the drivers and what are the risks, and how can we cut off those risks?

[147] So, for example, involvement in the cattle health certification standards scheme needn't just be confined to TB; it can be expanded to other diseases of cattle. And these large operations are usually very professional outfits. They've got very good health planning, and they've got a lot to lose, not just from a TB standpoint but on BVD or leptospirosis or any of these other diseases as well. So, I think, again, what we are doing is making sure the vet is at the heart of that, and that we work with them to help identify the risks. Then we can start to understand how we can cut off some of those risk factors, whilst allowing people to have a perfectly legitimate business of a large herd.

[148] **Jenny Rathbone:** Okay, so what you're saying is that although they are,

in theory, more at risk if they're in a large herd, nevertheless, professionalised practices in very large farms would mitigate that risk.

[149] **Professor Glossop:** Totally. And, of course, we have breakdowns in small beef herds as well, so it's just one subset of the bigger problem, but they do tend to be those long-term breakdowns. If we look at south-west Wales, our long-term breakdowns are of that nature. Down the border with England, there's a lot more beef production and smaller herds. There we tend to have what we call 'recurring breakdowns', so we clear them up but they go down with TB again. Now, there are different drivers to that than there are to these long-term breakdowns in the large dairy herds. But that's just emphasising the importance of understanding the different disease pictures in different parts of Wales, hence regionalisation, hence individual action plans for individual farms.

[150] **Mark Reckless:** Thank you. Can I propose a very quick final question from either Sian or Simon? One minute each, please.

[151] **Simon Thomas:** I just wanted to understand—. I'm sure when you went to Welshpool, they told you that the Scottish buyers weren't coming there anymore, and one of the reasons for that is that Wales is seen as a TB risky area. So, regionalisation helps address that, but it won't help address it if TB-free herds, either dairy or beef, in what's perceived as a poor region for TB—south-west Wales, for example—are seen as being tainted, if you like, by a herd coming from that area. So, it seems to me that regionalisation has to go hand in hand with mandatory reporting and risk-based trading. You can't really separate the two; we can't have the one without the other, can we?

[152] **Lesley Griffiths:** I don't think they did actually raise about Scotland with me—

[153] **Simon Thomas:** Well, they did with me, certainly, quite a few times.

[154] **Lesley Griffiths:** --I don't think so. But, no, I agree with what you're saying.

[155] **Simon Thomas:** Okay.

[156] **Mark Reckless:** Sian.

[157] **Sian Gwenllian:** Roeddwn i jest **Sian Gwenllian:** I just wanted to ask:

eisiau gofyn: pa mor bwysig ydych chi'n meddwl fydd cyhoeddi y gogledd fel parth risg isel, fel ardal lan? A ydy hynny yn flaenoriaeth uchel gennych chi? A ydy hynny yn beth pwysig i ddigwydd o ran y byd amaethyddol o ran delwedd Cymru? how important do you think announcing the north as a low risk zone, as a clean area, will be? Is that a priority for you? Is that an important thing to happen in terms of the agricultural world in terms of Wales's image?

[158] **Lesley Griffiths:** Yes, absolutely, and one of the reasons for looking at regionalisation was—. For me, if we can, and I think we can probably can, declare north-west Wales as TB-free, if it fits into the criteria of what is TB-free, I think that will send such a positive message outwards from Wales, but I think also within the industry it will send a good message. It's a priority for me to keep it a low risk, and the cattle measures that we're taking are wholly to do that, to protect those areas.

[159] **Sian Gwenllian:** And have you got any timescale in mind? Have you got any target?

[160] **Lesley Griffiths:** Well, we need to fit into the criteria. I haven't got a timescale, but ASAP would be what I would want. I don't know if there's any further information.

[161] **Professor Glossop:** In accordance with the European legislation, you have to have an incidence of below 0.1 per cent by herd over a six-year period, but you can do that retrospectively. So, what we're doing at the moment is reworking all those calculations, but we've also obviously got to protect that position in order to not announce a zone and then, unfortunately, have to claw back. So, we want to be completely sure, and that's why these measures definitely need to be in place first. But, of course, once we've done that, we don't want to stop at north-west Wales. The whole idea is to target our approach, to drive that level of TB down across the country. But the benefit to north-west Wales as being the first area is—. Peredur Hughes, who I think I might quote, who is the chair of our animal health and welfare framework group, I asked him what colour—you know, how are we going to develop the map, and he said, 'Our TB-free areas need to be coloured in pure gold'. And he's exactly right, and we need people to feel like that—that it's worth it, it's worth fighting for, it's achievable, not just for north-west Wales—that's the starting point—but to roll this out and use our resources to the best of our ability and base everything on evidence until we have a TB-free Wales, and we'll colour the whole of Wales in gold.

[162] **Mark Reckless:** Thank you very, very much. We look forward to your reporting, I assume, back to the Assembly once you've digested the consultation responses. We wanted briefly to turn from TB to the issue of snares, and we will be quick. I just wondered, Cabinet Secretary, could you update us on the meeting of 16 November, it's status and what conclusions, if any, were reached from that.

[163] **Lesley Griffiths:** The meeting on 16 November was with stakeholders. So, the stakeholder group was set up, I think, back in—way before my time—2012, after there was a particularly damning report about the use of snares. So, the stakeholder group was set up. There was a meeting on 16 November. I understand a draft note has been circulated with the stakeholders who were present. I would be very happy to share that with you once it's been cleared, and I would hope that that would be done before Christmas, and I can get it to you. If not—obviously we'll be in recess, so, if not, early in January. I think one of the things that was done at that meeting was that the stakeholders were challenged to see what their views were around the activity of the use of snares. One thing that we're doing, and I'll bring Martin in, perhaps, because you were at the meeting, to say a bit more, but one thing we want to see is the use of the compliant snares. I've actually found out the cost is £1—the difference. Now, whilst we can't force people to do it, and we can't stop non-compliant snares being sold, I think we can push the industry, and that's one thing we did with the stakeholders on 16 November.

[164] **Mark Reckless:** Can't we legislate to prevent non-compliant snares being sold?

[165] **Lesley Griffiths:** Can't we legislate? I wouldn't have thought so.

[166] **Mr Williams:** It would require primary legislation to change—

[167] **Lesley Griffiths:** Oh, yes, sorry—we could, couldn't we? We'd need primary legislation. But I would rather do it working with the industry, to see what the issues were. Can you give any further information on the 16 November meeting?

[168] **Mr Williams:** Yes. Of course, yes. We've got a kind of stakeholder group; we've taken a very collaborative approach to the development of the code that was launched just over a year ago, from both the pro and anti lobby. So, they've all engaged and fed into that process and produced the

code that we issued.

[169] The meeting on the 16th was a kind of refresh of that, just to see how far we'd gone in terms of promulgating that within the industry—how well it had been taken forward, how it had been taken up, any particular issues or problems they'd identified with the code. On the whole, the feedback was very positive. A lot of work had been undertaken, particularly among the gamekeeping community and the farming community—certain parts of it, anyway. So, there was quite positive feedback. There were a couple of issues that came up. One is the availability of the code-compliant snare. At the present time they're not routinely available, but we're working hard with the supplier who supplies 95 per cent of the snares into Wales to come up with a code-compliant snare and make more information available to us.

[170] **Lesley Griffiths:** One thing that we are doing to the stakeholder group is offering training, and that's a really good message to get out to the sector—that, if they still feel that there are individuals or groups that need further training, that can be provided through the stakeholder group.

[171] **Mark Reckless:** We are likely to follow up with some written questions, but I did say to Vikki that we would allow her an opportunity to put one or two questions to you.

[172] **Vikki Howells:** Thank you, Chair. I certainly welcome the fact that the committee's undertaking an inquiry into the use of snares in Wales because, personally, it's the biggest issue that I've been lobbied on on an all-Wales basis by my constituents, by a large mile. So, clearly, there is a strength of public feeling out there about the issue, and I think it's very important that the committee takes that on board and shows the public that we are responding to those concerns by looking into it. But certainly what we found from our evidence session last week is that, on both sides of the argument, the biggest issue—the biggest problem—that we're coming up against is the lack of all-Wales specific data, that, currently, the data that are available are looking at Wales and England together, and I just wondered whether the Welsh Government has any plans about looking into acquiring Wales-based data that we could use to really drive the issue forward in a balanced manner.

12:30

[173] **Lesley Griffiths:** Is this for use or for sales?

[174] **Vikki Howells:** Both, really. For use and—

[175] **Lesley Griffiths:** Certainly on sales, we've got great difficulty trying to get up-to-date data. I don't know whether it's kind of marketing issues; I don't know. On use, I think we have got some up-to-date data on use, which we could—

[176] **Mr Williams:** We've got some figures, but they're an extrapolation out of the 2012 work that was done on an England-and-Wales basis, which are very general.

[177] **Lesley Griffiths:** Yes, they are.

[178] **Mr Williams:** There's no obvious kind of data collection or monitoring regime that picks up the use of snares. We challenged the group on 16 November to give us evidence on how many of their members were involved in snaring, and could they put some information together for us on that.

[179] **Lesley Griffiths:** The BVA have offered to also try and get us some data, too.

[180] **Mr Williams:** And the police as well are going to look at their monitoring systems.

[181] **Vikki Howells:** That would be very useful. Thank you.

[182] **Mark Reckless:** Do you, in principle, believe snaring can be done humanely in such a way that it should be allowed because of any benefits you perceive from it?

[183] **Lesley Griffiths:** Yes, I do, but I think that we need to make sure that it's the compliant snares that are used. But, yes, absolutely.

[184] **Mark Reckless:** We'll follow up some further questions in writing. Thank you very, very much indeed, Cabinet Secretary, and your team.

[185] **Lesley Griffiths:** Thank you very much

12:32

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd
o'r Cyfarfod**

**Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public
from the Meeting**

Cynnig:

Motion:

*bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu that the committee resolves to
gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y exclude the public from the
cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog remainder of the meeting in
17.42(vi).*

*accordance with Standing Order
17.42(vi).*

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[186] **Mark Reckless:** For those Members who are able remain, we will move briefly into a private session under Standing Order 17.42, subject to Members' agreement.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 12:32.

The public part of the meeting ended at 12:32.