

Welcome! So, we are now over halfway through the 2022 badger vaccination season and are pleased to report that we have vaccinated 392 badgers over a total area of 114 km<sup>2</sup>. We have had an overwhelmingly positive response from farmers and landowners, and have now been granted permission to vaccinate badgers over an area of 250 km<sup>2</sup>. The team on the ground are now busy with the day-to-day operations to make sure we have all this area covered by the end of the vaccination season on 30th November. The hot, dry weather experienced during the summer months

has been somewhat of a challenge—with badgers apparently roaming further afield to find sources of food. However, we have had some great successes, which has given a boost to our team members.

During June 2022, we were able to arrange for more members of the team to be 'signed off' as lay badger vaccinators. Co-ordinating this training is no mean feat—having to juggle the availability of trainers and trainees, ensure we have sufficient badgers to vaccinate, and hope the weather does not prevent the training event going ahead—as we cannot set traps 'live' if extreme weather conditions are forecast! Another change the team have had to deal with in 2022 was the introduction of an App to record all badger vaccination operations. Previously, all activities had to be recorded on paper, then entered into a spreadsheet to send to Natural England. As you can imagine, this took a considerable amount of time—and it was always difficult filling in forms in the rain. The new App means that all the information can be collected on a phone or tablet, and gets automatically uploaded as soon as the person can connect to the internet. It took a while to get used to, but has made things a lot simpler for everyone involved!

## VESBA Stats\*

Number of badgers vaccinated	392
Land area vaccinated	114 km <sup>2</sup>
Number of lay vaccinators	6
Number of people trained to set traps	24

\* Data up to 15th September, 2022

## Save the Date!

Our annual meeting will take place at

**6.30pm on Wednesday**

**30th November, 2022**

at the

**Roebuck Inn, Laughton.**



A hog roast will be available from 6.30pm followed by an update from the Project Team. It will be a great chance to meet everyone involved in the project, so please come along if you can.

To book your place, please email Laura—[laura.anderson@cliffevets.co.uk](mailto:laura.anderson@cliffevets.co.uk) or call

**07977 241808**

**Places are FREE but will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, so please book early to avoid disappointment!**

## Did you know...?

The vaccine used to vaccinate badgers is called Badger BCG, but is essentially the same as the BCG vaccine used to vaccinate humans. It is given as a 1mL dose into the muscle on the back leg.



When we trap and vaccinate a badger, we also mark the badger. A temporary mark is applied using a spray stock mark, but a longer lasting mark is made by trimming some of the hairs on the back of the badger. Although badgers coats look grey, these are 'guard hairs' - but underneath them, the badger's coat is much lighter. By trimming the guard hairs to expose a patch of the lighter under coat, we will know if we recapture a badger that has already been vaccinated during the season. If this happens, the badger is assessed to make sure it is healthy, then released without vaccination.



We don't know for sure how long the immunity against TB lasts for in vaccinated badgers, which is why we repeat the vaccination annually.

## Meet the Team!

Ever wanted to know more about the people involved in VESBA?

**Name:** Dr Lindsay Heasman

**Role:** Project Manager



Lindsay has been involved in VESBA from its very conception—at a farmer meeting organised by the TB Advisory Service in June 2018. Lindsay co-ordinated the successful tender response, and now oversees the project, liaising with Defra, the funding body. Whilst Laura does a fantastic job of co-ordinating the day-to-day activities, Lindsay works behind the scenes to make sure the project delivers its milestones—on time and within budget! Lindsay has a passion for all things related to eradicating bTB, and was recently invited to join the TB Partnership—a group of stakeholders advising government on TB Policy. Outside of work, Lindsay enjoys growing veggies and walking her dogs in the beautiful Kent countryside.

## Please get in touch!

If you have any questions about the VESBA project, please visit:

[www.vesba.org.uk](http://www.vesba.org.uk)

Alternatively, please give Laura Anderson a call on

**07977 241808**