

THIRD SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN WALES AND BOVINE TB

- The Welsh Assembly Government has a commitment in *One Wales*, the programme for government, to “*vigorously pursue a programme of bovine TB eradication*” and has secured £27million over the next three years to take this programme forward. The Minister for Rural Affairs announced in Plenary on 8 April 2008 a comprehensive programme of action to eradicate bovine TB.
- Implementation of the eradication programme cannot be the responsibility of the Government alone – the role of the veterinary profession, the farming industry and welfare/voluntary sector organisations with an interest in wildlife (badgers) will be crucial. Only through working in partnership over a sustained period will we have an impact on reducing the incidence of the disease.
- A Wales TB Eradication framework has been developed through consultation, and workshops, with a range of stakeholders including voluntary sector organisations such as the **RSPCA, Wales Environment Link** (which incorporates local **wildlife trusts** from across Wales) and especially the **Badger Trust Cymru**.
- The TB team is also engaged with the **Young Farmers (Cymru)**, through the Animal Health and Welfare Steering Committee (see below), and the **National Trust** who own substantial areas of land, particularly in West Wales, and who after meeting with the Chief Veterinary Officer (Wales), Christianne Glossop, have agreed to allow badger culling on their property as long as specific criteria have been met.
- The eradication programme utilises the Animal Health and Welfare Steering Committee as a stakeholder group, and for the purposes of bovine TB representatives from Wales Environment Link, Young Farmers (Cymru) are drafted in to represent interests previously part of the Wales TB Action Group as well as RSPCA who are permanent members.
- Clearly there will not always be a consensus reached between parties as to the best way forward but officials must, and will, continue to work closely with voluntary sector, and other, interests to ensure that a full spectrum of opinion has been engaged.
- Beyond the bovine TB Eradication Programme OCVO officials have met with representatives of the **Hindu Council UK** in relation to TB testing and animals owned by religious communities, exploring strategies for proactive co-operation rather than reactive conflict.