BOVINE TB AND BADGER CULLING IN THE PILOT AREAS – BVA POLICY POSITION

1. The Independent Expert Panel’s findings show that the pilot badger culls in Gloucestershire and Somerset failed to meet the criteria for both effectiveness overall and with respect to the humaneness of controlled shooting.

2. We urge Defra to confirm that the use of shotguns for controlled shooting will no longer be permitted given the lack of evidence on their humaneness.

3. BVA welcomes the Government’s decision not to roll out badger culling to more areas at this point in time.

4. In considering whether to support the continuation of culling in the two pilot areas, BVA has carefully weighed up both the scientific evidence and the ethical arguments.

5. Evidence from the Randomised Badger Culling Trial suggests that if culling in the pilot areas is stopped now there is a significant risk that this will lead to an increase in TB in cattle in those areas.

6. However BVA could only support further culling in the pilot areas if steps are taken to improve both its effectiveness and the humaneness of controlled shooting. We therefore support the IEP’s recommendations for improving effectiveness and humaneness and urge Defra to implement them all fully.

7. The detail of how the IEP recommendations will be implemented is critical if they are to deliver the necessary improvements. Defra’s response currently does not provide us with sufficient detail or assurances to satisfy us that it will deliver the necessary improvements in effectiveness or humaneness. We are therefore seeking further dialogue with Defra in order to clarify its response and strengthen its implementation of the proposed improvements.

8. We are clear that BVA could only support further culling in the pilot areas in 2014 if there is robust monitoring and collation of results, and independent analysis and auditing by a non-governmental body.