

Welcome! So, the 2022 badger vaccination season is now underway. Thanks to all the farmers and landowners that have signed up to the project already—and an even bigger thanks to our dedicated team that have been out and about, undertaking sett surveying, pre-baiting and setting cage traps so that we can vaccinate badgers against bovine TB. In the first week of May, we vaccinated a total of 44 badgers across four sites—a phenomenal achievement!

If you have already signed up to take part in the VESBA project, a member of the Project Team will be in touch shortly (if this hasn't already happened!), to agree a planned start date for pre-baiting. The pre-baiting phase typically takes 2 weeks. Pre-baiting can either be done by a member of the Project Team, or, ideally, someone from the farm. A typical 'trap round' might take between 1 - 2 hours each day for the 2 week period and is ideally done in the afternoon or early evening (to minimise the risk of the peanut bait being discovered by non-target species, such as squirrels).

VESBA Stats*

Number of badgers vaccinated	107
Land area signed up	220 km ²
Number of lay vaccinators	8
Number of people trained to set traps	24

* Data up to 17th May, 2022

Come and see us!

Members of the VESBA Team will be at
Heathfield Show on
Saturday, 28th May, 2022.

We will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have—so please come along and see us on the Cliffe Veterinary Group stand!

What's involved?

Badger vaccination takes place between the months of May and November each year. There are five stages in the process.



Step 1 - Surveying

Land surveys are done to identify areas of badger activity including active setts, runs and latrines

Step 2 - Pre-baiting

Bait points (shallow holes filled with peanuts) are dug in active areas to get badgers used to finding peanuts—which they love!

Step 3 - Putting in cage traps

We use special, approved cage traps. The doors of the traps are fixed open and the bait point slowly moved towards the back of the cage.

Step 4 - Setting traps live

Over two consecutive nights, the cage doors are set open. If a badger enters, the door shuts behind them.

Step 5—Vaccination

The following morning, any trapped badgers are assessed, vaccinated with BCG, marked with a spray and then released.

Did you know...?

Badgers are nocturnal, and live in underground dens called 'setts'. A badger sett can usually be identified by the unique D-shaped holes at the entrance to the sett - and there is often a pile of spoil when the ground has been dug out.



Typical D-shaped hole

Badgers are omnivorous - meaning they feed on plants and other animals, with earthworms being one of their most common food sources. You can tell what a badger has been eating by looking at its faeces. Badgers defecate in shallow holes called latrines - which are also used to mark their territories.



Badger latrine

Badgers have very long claws and are adept at climbing! They are also able to flatten their bodies and squeeze through a gap of 10cm - about the width of your hand! It is important to remember this if you are looking to make buildings inaccessible to badgers!

Meet the Team!

Ever wondered about the people involved in the VESBA Project?

Name: Laura Anderson

Role: Project Co-ordinator



Laura joined Cliffe Veterinary Group in June 2021, to take up the role of Project Co-ordinator for the VESBA project. Laura is responsible for the day-to-day running of the project, including liaising with farmers, landowners and Delivery Partners, to make sure that everyone and everything is in the right place at the right time! No mean feat—especially at this time of year, when we are busy planning all the activities for the vaccination season!

Outside of work, Laura enjoys the rural life, including helping out on her partner's dairy farm, walking her dogs and spending time with her friends and family.

Please get in touch!

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

www.vesba.org.uk

Alternatively, please give Laura Anderson a call on

07977 241808