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By email only

Mr Paul Herring
Chief Operating Officer
Network for Animals

7 July 2015

From Nigel Gibbens
Chief Veterinary Officer and Director General

Dear Mr Herring,

Open letter on badger cull in Gloucestershire

I refer to your letter dated 23rd June 2015.

Following my advice on the outcome of the second year of the badger culls, to which you refer, there is ongoing dialogue between Natural England and the cull company about measures that the latter is putting in place to ensure that culling in subsequent years is carried out more effectively in terms of numbers of badgers removed.

Improvements introduced by the cull company will be reflected in their 2015 operations plans, which Natural England will consider once submitted, with advice from me as Chief Veterinary Officer.

Planning the 2015 operation is an iterative process and I will of course not be in a position to comment on the extent of any improvements in the cull company's plans until the point of final submission. As outlined in my earlier advice, areas where I will be expecting to see evidence of lessons learned will include training and assessment, operational planning, monitoring and delivery.

An authorisation letter for a 2015 cull in Gloucestershire will be issued only if Natural England is satisfied that the cull company's operations plans demonstrate that it has taken on board lessons from its culling experience in 2014, and is in a position to deliver a more effective cull in terms of numbers of badgers removed.

If on reviewing the plans I am not satisfied that this is the case, my advice to Natural England will be not to authorise a cull in Gloucestershire in 2015.

I trust that this will reassure your organisation.

Yours sincerely

NIGEL GIBBENS
CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER AND DIRECTOR GENERAL