

Press release: Bovine TB strategy review

The government has announced [a review of its 25 year Bovine TB strategy](#) to be chaired by Sir Charles Godfray, a population biologist and Fellow of the Royal Society.

Four years after the 25 year strategy was first published, Environment Secretary Michael Gove has said he believes now is a good time to review progress and consider what additional actions might be necessary now to ensure other tools and interventions are ready to be deployed in later phases of the strategy. The government has said it also envisages future reviews at five yearly intervals.

The 25 year strategy outlined a very broad range of interventions to fight the disease including tighter cattle movement controls and removal of infected cattle from herds, improved diagnostic tests, enhanced biosecurity measures, the culling of badgers in areas where disease is rife, vaccination of badgers and work to develop a viable vaccine for use in cattle.

So far, the principal elements deployed in the first phase of the strategy have been cattle movement controls, the removal of infected cattle from herds and the badger cull which covered more than 20 different areas in 2017. Michael Gove and Farming Minister George Eustice have said they want to ensure other elements of the strategy, such as cattle vaccination or developing genetic resistance, are ready to be deployed in the next phase of the strategy in order to ensure the government maintains progress towards its target of becoming officially TB free by 2038.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

Bovine TB is a slow moving, insidious disease which presents many challenges. It is difficult to detect, can be harboured in the wildlife population and no vaccine is fully effective. There is no single measure that will provide an easy answer and that is why we are pursuing a wide range of interventions including cattle movement controls and a cull of badgers in areas where disease is rife.

Now is a good time to review progress to date and identify steps we could take now to accelerate some of the elements of our 25 year strategy that might be deployed in later phases. While the badger culls are a necessary part of the strategy, no one wants to be culling badgers forever.

Bovine TB has a negative effect on the health and welfare of affected animals

and dealing with the disease costs the taxpayer an estimated £100 million a year. Over the last year alone more than 30,000 infected cattle had to be slaughtered in England.

The [review's Terms of Reference](#) are available.

The review is due to end in September 2018. The findings will be submitted to Defra Ministers for consideration and a final report published in due course.

News story: GC offers APA validated postgraduate residential course

The Association of Public Analysts (APA) Educational Trust and the Government Chemist Programme in LGC organise an annual RSC-approved, fully residential week long postgraduate course on the analysis and examination of food and feed. The course will take place from 16 to 20 April 2018.

See attached programme for full details.

PDF, 370KB, 2 pages

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The course, over a two year cycle, offers a distinctive learning experience, validated by active practitioners in the APA Training Committee, with unique features:

- a vibrant mix of lectures, laboratory practical sessions and interactive exercises
- wide range of experts, not available together elsewhere
- up to date teaching of safety (chemical and microbiological), authenticity, analysis and the law of food, water, feeding-stuffs and fertilisers
- professional networking with peer group and leading experts, National Reference Laboratories, senior academic researchers and policy officials
- alignment with the MChemA*syllabus
- practical and relevant training in microbiology theory and hands-on

laboratory work

- tuition on foreign body identification and hands-on lab training in microscopy.

The MChemA (Mastership in Chemical Analysis) is the statutory qualification prescribed to practice as a Public Analyst by the Food Safety (Sampling and Qualifications) Regulations 2013

Who is this course for?

This course is particularly appropriate for aspiring MChemA candidates but will also be valuable for anyone working in a Public Analysts' or food /animal feed laboratory who wishes to equip themselves with additional skills.

Course details

Topics will include food authenticity, microbiology theory and lab practical work, microscopy lab practical tuition, toxicology, drinking and bottled water quality, contaminants, food contact materials and food packaging taints. An evening session offers training in foreign body identification.

The accommodation will be in University hotel grade bedrooms with breakfast and evening meals taking place in 'The Cedars', located centrally on Reading University Campus. The teaching will take place in seminar rooms and laboratories.

Booking information

If you are not able to join us for the whole week, do not hesitate to consider daily attendance. See leaflet for daily rates.

Return the completed [Registration form](#) (MS Word Document, 31.7KB) to [Michael Walker](#) to book the course by 29 March.

For any queries about the course or the activities of the Government Chemist please contact

[Press release: Kent Law School puts Solicitor General in the 'hot seat'](#)

Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP will visit the University of Kent's Law Clinic today to see the pro bono work happening there.

While there, the Solicitor General will also take part in a 'hot seat'

Question and Answer session. The students will have the opportunity to ask questions about pro bono work and Public Legal Education.

The Solicitor General will also tour the new £5 million Kent Law Clinic as part of his visit and meet staff and solicitors from the local community who volunteer there. The Law Clinic takes on pro bono cases for individuals and community organisations who are unable to afford other legal services.

The Solicitor General said:

Pro bono work often starts at universities and colleges, where students gain first-hand experience of providing legal advice and help to those in need.

The advice these students give will help make a real difference to people's lives as well as to the communities in which they live.

They are the next generation of lawyers, and the skills they gain now will put them in good stead in their future professional careers.

The students gain practical experience of the law in the clinic, and are involved in all aspects of casework. They undertake such tasks as interviewing clients, carrying out legal research, drafting statements of cases, negotiating and appearing as advocates before the County Court and other forums.

Professor John Fitzpatrick, Kent Law Clinic director said:

We are delighted that the Solicitor General is to visit the Kent Law Clinic, and warmly welcome his support for pro bono legal projects in universities.

Working in law clinics to provide a free legal service to those who need, but cannot to pay for access to the law offers students not only a new way of learning the law itself and very useful vocational skills, but also a new perspective on law and society.

We can only make a small contribution of course, but we hope a rich one to those clients and students who are involved.

[Press release: Climate change means](#)

more frequent flooding, warns Environment Agency

Flooding like this will become more frequent, the Environment Agency has warned, and people should know their risk

Intense bouts of flooding are set to become more frequent, the Environment Agency has warned today (Friday 16 February).

The warning follows a pattern of severe flooding over the past 10 years linked to an increase in extreme weather events as the country's climate changes. Met Office records show that since 1910 there have been 17 record breaking rainfall months or seasons – with 9 of them since 2000. As intense storms are becoming more frequent, sea levels are also rising because of climate change.

The Environment Agency has today launched its [Flood Action Campaign](#), targeting younger people through social media and online advertising to encourage them to check their flood risk at GOV.UK, sign up for free warnings and be prepared to take action when flooding hits. Research shows that 18 to 34 year olds are least likely to perceive flood risk to their area, know how to protect their homes or where to go for information. They are also at highest risk of fatality as they are less likely to perceive their personal risk.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

Climate change is likely to mean more frequent and intense flooding. Floods destroy – lives, livelihoods, and property.

Our flood defences reduce the risk of flooding, and our flood warnings help keep communities safe when it threatens. But we can never entirely eliminate the risk of flooding. Checking your flood risk is the first step to protecting yourself, your loved ones and your home.

In summer 2012, the lengthy period of drought the country had experienced came to an abrupt end when prolonged and intense rainfall increased the risk of flooding from rivers and surface water for long periods. Almost 8,000 homes and businesses were flooded across the country, particularly in the south west.

The winter of 2013 to 2014 started with a coastal surge and record sea levels on the north and east coasts. This was followed by 12 storms in succession and became the wettest winter for 250 years – 11,000 homes were flooded.

Winter 2015 to 2016 brought widespread flooding to 17,000 properties across

the north of England, with named storms Desmond, Eva and Frank causing December 2015 to be the wettest month ever recorded.

The threat of flooding is real and increasing – as is also demonstrated by its listing as one of the [nation's major threats](#).

Last year, the Met Office published new innovative research which found that for England and Wales there is a 1 in 3 chance of a new monthly rainfall record in at least one region each winter.

By their very nature extreme events are rare and a novel research method was needed to quantify the risk of extreme rainfall within the current climate.

Professor Adam Scaife, who leads this area of research at the Met Office, said:

“The Met Office supercomputer was used to simulate thousands of possible winters, some of them much more extreme than we’ve yet witnessed. This gave many more extreme events than have happened in the real world, helping us work out how severe things could get.”

[News story: Congestion busting scheme rolled out to benefit drivers](#)

Long traffic jams caused by roadworks could be a thing of the past as a scheme which has already significantly reduced delays in Kent and London is rolled out nationwide.

Lane rental schemes, where utility companies are charged up to £2,500 a day for digging up the busiest roads at peak times, could now be adopted by councils nationwide after successful trials in the south-east.

They incentivise firms to work on quieter roads or outside of rush hour, or even to collaborate with other companies to stop roads being dug up multiple times, to reduce the impact of roadworks on drivers.

Pilot lane rental schemes in London and Kent have seen congestion on the busiest roads drop, saving drivers time and boosting the economy.

Transport Minister Jo Johnson said:

Drivers often see red when roadworks cause them delays, especially if no one is working on them.

Lane rental has seen a massive drop in disruption to drivers as utility companies have changed when and where they carry out work.

Now we want millions of motorists around England to get the same benefits.

The Department for Transport carried out a [consultation into the scheme last year](#), and the majority of those responding supported its rollout nationwide. Many said they wanted to take advantage of the 'clear benefits' of lane rental schemes.

RAC head of roads policy Nicholas Lyes said:

This is a very welcome announcement. Trials showed that some of the worst congestion caused by planned utility works in London was reduced by half on roads where lane rental was in operation, so rolling this out will extend the benefits nationwide.

While motorists accept that some roadworks and congestion are unavoidable, lengthy and unnecessary queues are incredibly frustrating. RAC research suggests congestion on our roads and journey time reliability are growing concerns for motorists so introducing lane rental should encourage better planning and coordination of roadworks, and mean utility works are completed in a swifter, more efficient manner.

About 2.5 million roadworks are carried out each year, costing the economy £4 billion in increased costs to businesses through late employees or deliveries.

In London, utility companies have worked together more than 600 times since lane rental was introduced in 2015, up from just 100 beforehand.

The Department for Transport will produce guidance in the autumn to help councils develop lane rental schemes for approval. The first schemes could start by the end of 2019.