

[REDACTED]

BY EMAIL

9 October 2013

Dear [REDACTED]

Protection of Badgers Act 1992 – TB Control Area Licence, West Gloucestershire

[REDACTED]

We are writing formally to request an extension of the control area licence beyond the current six-week period which ends on 14 October. We believe that an extended period will be required in order to enable [REDACTED] authorised contractors to complete culling.

The progress of culling has been affected by a number of factors including the over-riding priority of maintaining public safety in the face of protestor activity, operating conditions, badger numbers and their behaviour in the cull area. These factors are set out in more detail below. Our contractors have had to acquire new skills in controlling badgers over the licence period and, backed up by a significantly ramped up Operations Centre, are now significantly better equipped to complete the culling effort. Up to 7 October the company has taken 631 badgers across the cull area.

Over the past three weeks the Company and the [REDACTED] have jointly taken steps to maximise the culling effort on the ground. This comprises redeploying contractors to new areas, purchasing thermal imaging equipment, increasing the number of cage traps deployed and supporting trapping effort through the engagement of professional cage trappers. We have also engaged with the Police to deliver controlled shooting in areas of high protestor activity and targeted culling in and around harvested maize crops.

Based on the current performance of contractors we can anticipate that by the end of the 6-week period the company will have removed close to 750 badgers. Based on the last week's performance we can reasonably expect our contractors to remove up to 20 badgers per 24 hour period. On the basis of our current understanding of badger numbers we request an extension to the licence for a period of up to 8 weeks but we would wish to discuss this further before finalising, in light of our experience on the ground and the most up-to-date population estimates.

The experience of our contractors and cage trappers on the ground suggests that culling effort in the eastern and western areas of the licence area has been largely successful with a few remaining pockets where culling needs to be completed to be certain that badger populations have been significantly reduced in these areas.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Culling in all areas has been affected to some extent by badger activity and behaviour. The late harvesting of maize crops for example has meant that badgers have had access to large areas of land with a readily available and palatable food source (maize cobs) in addition to other food sources such as blackberries. Combined, these food sources have limited the effectiveness of bait points and trapping in attracting and drawing out badgers. With large areas of maize cropped in the area, especially the central and eastern segments of the cull area, this has also constrained the area over which controlled shooting can take place as it is not possible to safely control badgers within standing crops.

In addition, our culling efforts have been constrained by protestor activity, particularly in the central part of the cull area from the river Severn to the Herefordshire county boundary. Protestor activity has been widespread with protestors adopting a range of tactics to frustrate culling efforts, with the result that contractors have had to withdraw so as not to compromise public safety. Some of the activities – camping on or near setts, making loud noises, use of fireworks and powerful torches have probably displaced badgers from some known setts. In recent days the policing presence in the area has been significantly enhanced and a number of arrests for illegal activities have taken place. But clearly more time is required to control badgers in areas where protestor activity has had a particular impact on culling.

Whatever number of badgers we have to remove, our plan would consist of:

- Better use of intelligence of badger activity to focus culling effort in those areas where badgers have been seen and/ or are known to be present.
- Capitalising on the ongoing maize harvest to open up new land for control activities
- Controlling badgers in areas where protestor activity has hindered culling effort
- Maintaining the cage trapping effort by ensuring that traps are strategically placed in areas where controlled shooting is either ineffective or difficult
- Ensuring that all available traps are deployed
- Retaining the services of the 5 professional cage trappers who have been deployed to support [REDACTED] contractors in cage trapping.

We can confirm that the participants and thus the area available to continue control remains the same as in the current licence. The list of Additional Authorised Persons submitted to you on 17 September 2013 remains extant. We can also confirm that sufficient funds remain in place in the company's bank account to continue culling operations over the remainder of the 4-year period.

As indicated above, we feel it is essential to discuss this application further before any decision is made, with particular reference to the additional number of badgers required.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Directors

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]