

COSTS AND WELFARE ISSUES OF TB IN CATTLE HERDS

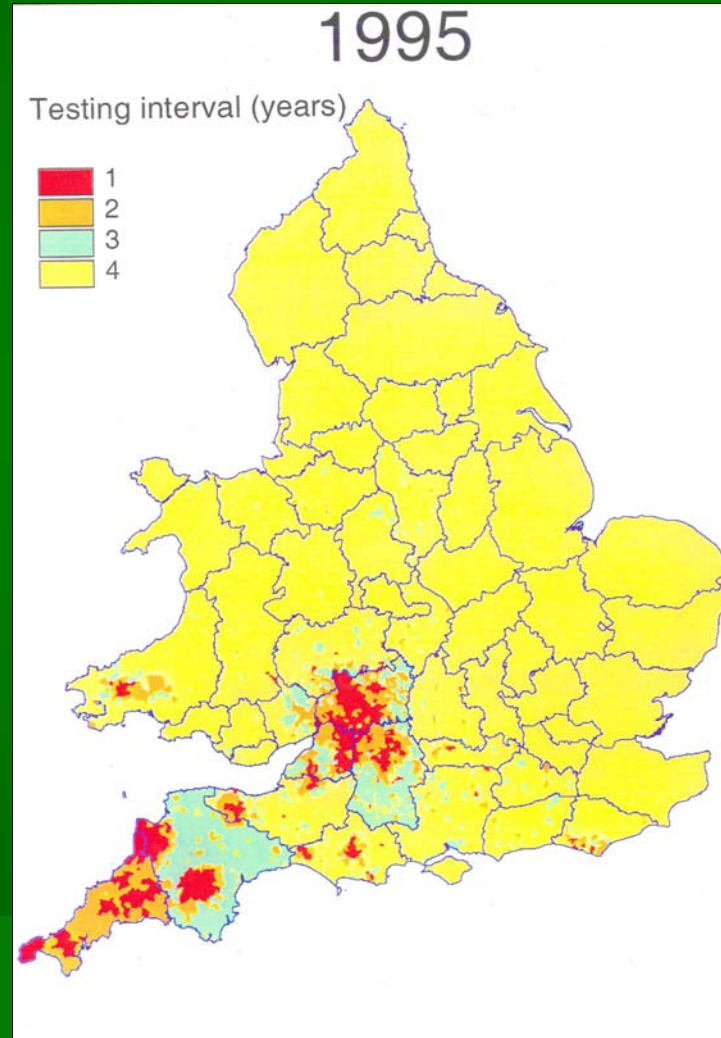
JAN ROWE

Presentation to SCAWS Conference

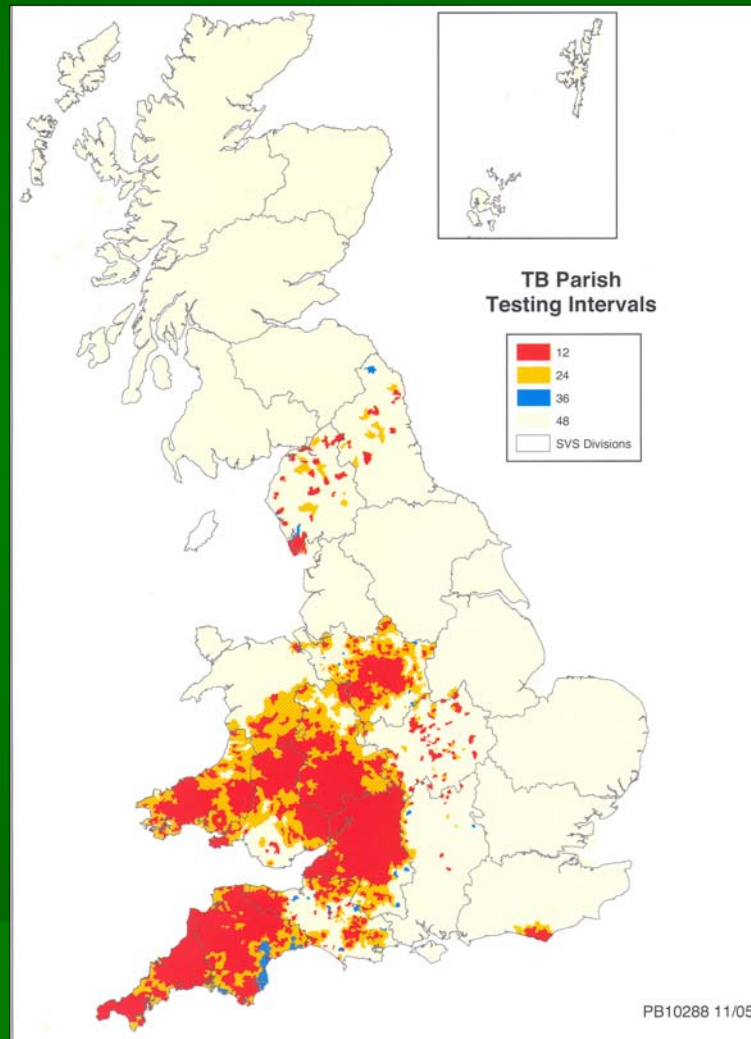
October 2006



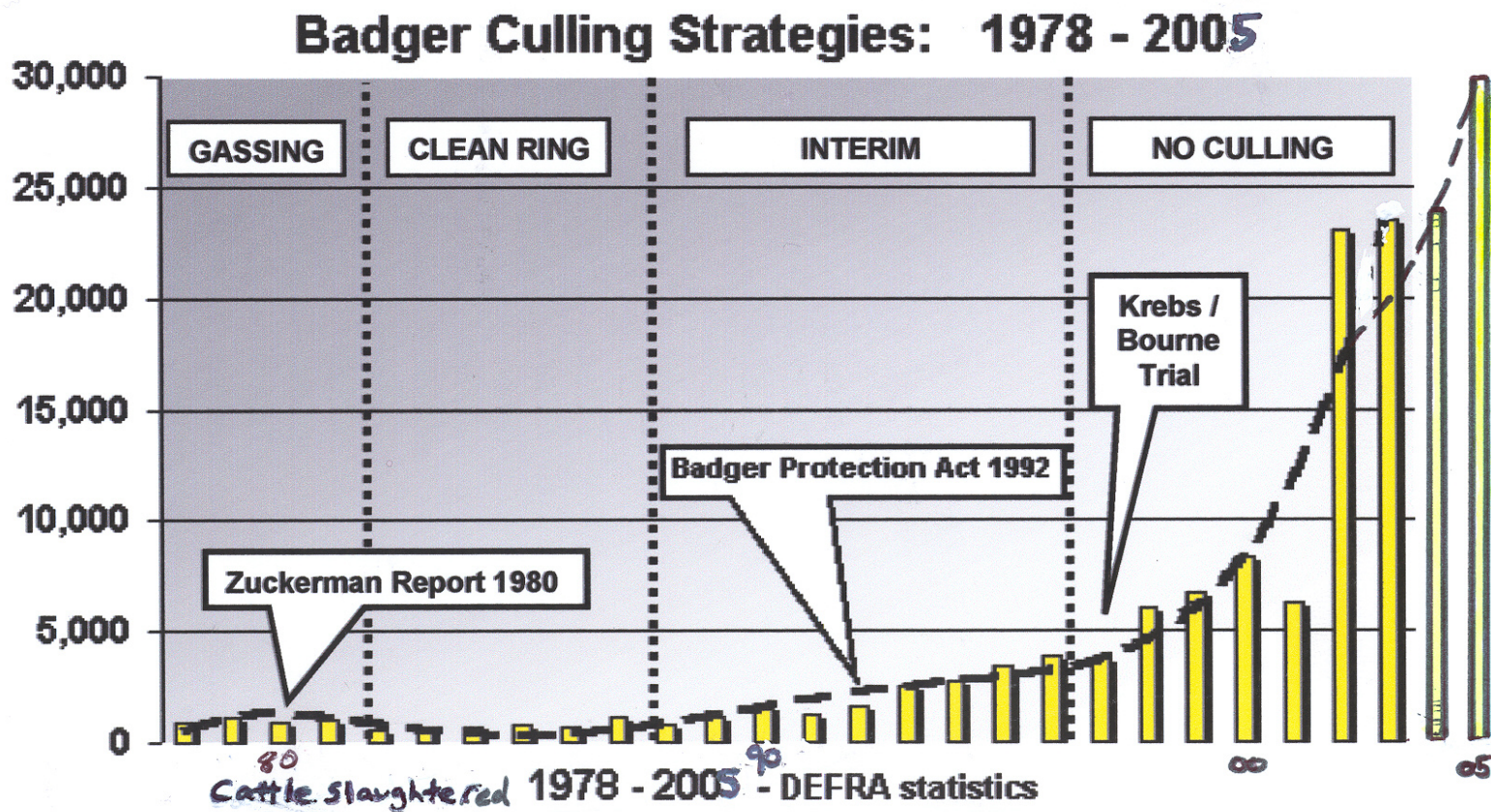
1995 Map of Parish test intervals



November 2005 Map of parish testing intervals



Badger culling strategies graph



Own farm situation

- 500ac Cotswold dairy / arable farm
- 180 pedigree dairy cows plus followers
- First TB outbreak 1986
- Since 2000, only 2 short periods clear
- 129 animals lost
- Farm adapted to TB
- Insurance no longer available

Problems of TB on farm

- **Helplessness**
 - Inability to plan ahead
 - Inability to legally deal with the risk
- **Utter wastefulness**
 - Animals
 - Manpower and time
 - Money – both farmers and tax payers

Problems of TB on farm - cont

- **Varying and often large economic impacts**
 - Animal and production loss
 - Cost of movement restriction
- **Emotional Impact**
 - Animals 'part of the family'
 - Personal / family stress
 - Shooting of calves
 - Worry over business viability

Estimated costs of TB at Whalley Farm

1986-2006

£ k

- Costs of testing	54
- Reduction / surplus in planned animal numbers	15
- Reduced sale values	10
- Change of enterprise structure	125
- Loss of closed herd status	30
- Variable compensation	8
- Constant disruption to business plan	<u>10</u>
	£ 252 k



Main cost areas for TB

- Cost of testing
- Loss of animals
- Isolation of reactors / IRS
- Movement restrictions
- Restocking costs
- B***** factor

Some typical TB problems

- **Cannot get out of farming because of TB**
- **Store producers with no sale / no food / no buildings**
- **Having to shoot calves**
- **Loss of favourite animals / family pets / blood lines**
- **Closed herds with good biosecurity being decimated**
- **Severe overstocking contrary to all good advice**
- **Restriction on enterprise availability**
- **Sales timing dictated by test timetable not business timetable**

Defra's Autumn '05 package on TB

- **Tabular Valuation**
- **Pre-movement testing**
- **Badger culling consultation**

Tabular Valuation

- **Aim is to reduce cost of compensation to taxpayer**
- **Far too simplistic especially for high value breeding**
- **Whole industry condemnation of the idea**
- **Beginning to cause unrest and may affect 'cooperation' or precipitate uncoordinated action against badgers**

Pre-movement testing

- Theoretically a good idea but based on a weak individual animal test
- Is experimental so Defra should pay
- Likely to be logistically difficult and very expensive from March '07
- Has not worked in Republic of Ireland
- Spoligotype mapping does not support the theory that animal movements are to blame for the TB increase inside hotspots.

Possible badger culling

- **Decision postponed because of fall in TB in '06**
- **Any culling policy must be flexible and allowed to evolve**
- **The best way of reducing the long term cost and misery of TB is to invest now and aim for the eradication of the disease in cattle**