



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru  
The National Assembly for Wales**

**Yr Is-bwyllgor Datblygu Gwledig  
The Rural Development Sub-committee**

**Dydd Mercher, 8 Gorffennaf 2009  
Wednesday, 8 July 2009**

**Cynnwys**  
**Contents**

- 3 Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau  
Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest
- 4 Adroddiad ar gynnydd y rhaglen i ddileu TB mewn gwartheg  
Progress Report on the Bovine TB Eradication Programme
- 21 Cynnig Trefniadol  
Procedural Motion

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,  
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.  
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

**Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**  
**Committee members in attendance**

Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (dirprwyo ar ran Mick Bates)
Alun Davies	Welsh Liberal Democrats (substituting for Mick Bates) Llafur (Cadeirydd yr Is-bwyllgor) Labour (Sub-committee Chair)
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Brynle Williams	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives

**Eraill yn bresennol**  
**Others in attendance**

Dr Christianne Glossop	Y Prif Swyddog Milfeddygol Chief Veterinary Officer
Dafydd Glyn Saunders Jones	Pennaeth y Tîm TB, Swyddfa'r Prif Swyddog Milfeddygol Head of TB Team, Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer
Elin Jones	Aelod Cynulliad, Plaid Cymru, y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig Assembly Member, The Party of Wales, the Minister for Rural Affairs

**Swyddogion Gwasanaeth Seneddol y Cynulliad yn bresennol**  
**Assembly Parliamentary Service officials in attendance**

Claire Morris	Clerc Clerk
Meriel Singleton	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.33 a.m.*  
*The meeting began at 9.33 a.m.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau**  
**Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

[1] **Alun Davies:** Galwaf y cyfarfod i drefn. Diolch yn fawr am eich presenoldeb. Pwrpas y cyfarfod yw trafod yr adroddiad ar TB gwartheg ac ystyried sut mae rhaglen y Llywodraeth yn symud ymlaen. Yr ydym wedi derbyn ymddiheuriadau gan Mick Bates, ac mae Peter Black yn dirprwyo yn ei le.

**Alun Davies:** I call the meeting to order. Thank you for your attendance. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the report on bovine TB and to consider the progress of the Government's programme. We have received an apology from Mick Bates, and Peter Black is the substitute for him.

9.34 a.m.

## **Adroddiad ar Gynnydd y Rhaglen i Ddileu TB mewn Gwartheg Progress Report on the Bovine TB Eradication Programme**

[2] **Alun Davies:** Gofynnaf i'r Gweinidog gyflwyno ei swyddogion yn gyntaf, ac wedyn fe'i gwahoddaf i wneud unrhyw sylwadau agoriadol cyn imi wahodd yr Aelodau i holi cwestiynau.

**Alun Davies:** I will ask the Minister to introduce her officials first of all, and I will then invite her to make any opening remarks before inviting Members to ask questions.

[3] **Elin Jones:** Diolch am y gwahoddiad i ddod i'r pwyllgor. Y ddau swyddog sydd gyda mi yw Christianne Glossop, Prif Swyddog Milfeddygol Cymru, a Dafydd Glyn Saunders Jones, pennaeth y cynllun TB.

**Elin Jones:** Thank you for the invitation to come to committee. The two officials with me are Christianne Glossop, Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales, and Dafydd Glyn Saunders Jones, head of the TB programme.

[4] Rhoddaf ddiweddariad ichi, sydd efallai yn mynd â ni ychydig ymhellach hyd yn oed na'r diweddariad yn yr adroddiad ysgrifenedig i'r pwyllgor. Gwneuthum ymrwymiad i roi adroddiad blynyddol ar y cynnydd ar y rhaglen gwaredu TB, a hwn, heddiw, yw'r adroddiad blynyddol cyntaf wedi'r cyhoeddiad ym mis Ebrill. Ers hynny, yr ydym wedi symud ymlaen gyda'r gwahanol agweddau ar y rhaglen, wedi sefydlu tri bwrdd gwaredu TB rhanbarthol, ac mae'r rheini'n weithredol ac yn cynnig syniadau ac yn datblygu'r gwaith ar lefel ranbarthol.

I will give you an update, which perhaps takes us even further than the update in the written report to the committee. I made a commitment to provide an annual report on the progress of the TB eradication programme, and this, today, is the first annual report since the announcement in April. Since then, we have moved forward with various aspects of the programme, having established three regional TB eradication boards, which are now operational and providing ideas and developing work on a regional level.

[5] Ym mis Mawrth, fel y mae'r pwyllgor yn gwybod, cyhoeddais y byddai ardal beilot gweithredu dwys yn cael ei sefydlu yng ngogledd sir Benfro. Yr ydym wrthi ar hyn o bryd yn ymgynghori ar y ddeddfwriaeth a fydd yn ein galluogi i weithredu'r rhaglen waredu yn yr ardal honno. Mae'r ymgynghoriad yn dod i ben ddiwedd mis Gorffennaf. Mae'n bwysig nodi bod yr ymgynghoriad a'r ddeddfwriaeth yn cynnwys gweithredu ar ladd a brechu moch daear.

In March, as the committee knows, I announced the establishment of the intensive action pilot area in north Pembrokeshire. We are currently engaged in consulting on the legislation that will enable us to implement the eradication programme in that area. The consultation closes at the end of July. It is important to note that the consultation and the legislation include action on badger culls and badger inoculation.

[6] Er mis Hydref, yr ydym wedi bod wrthi'n profi gwartheg o dan Archwiliad Iechyd TB Cymru. Mae'r ffigurau diweddaraf sydd gyda ni, hyd ddiwedd Mehefin, yn dangos ein bod wedi darganfod 77 o fuchesi sy'n adweithio i TB yn ychwanegol at y rhai y byddwn ni wedi eu darganfod gyda'r system brofi a oedd ar waith ynghynt—ni fyddai rhai o'r rheini wedi cael eu profi am TB tan o bosibl 2011-12, ac felly mae'r clefyd wedi cael ei waredu

Since October, we have been busy testing cattle under TB Heath Check Wales. The most recent figures available to us, up to the end of June, show that we have found 77 reactor herds in addition to those that we would have discovered had we continued with the previous testing regime—some of those would not have been tested for TB possibly until 2011-12, so the disease is being eradicated at a quicker pace.

ynghynt.

[7] Gan fod y rhaglen archwiliad iechyd TB yn dod i ben ddiwedd eleni, cyfyd y cwestiwn: pa fath o brofi gwartheg a wnawn ar ôl 2011? Mae'r Comisiwn Ewropeaidd yn glir ei farn bod y profi presennol yng Nghymru—sydd wedi digwydd yn hanesyddol ar lefel plwyfi—yn annigonol, gan fod yr ardaloedd prawf yn rhy fach. Felly, yr wyf wedi penderfynu, ers rhoi'r adroddiad ysgrifenedig ichi, y byddwn, o 2010 ymlaen, yn ymestyn profi blynyddol ac yn cynnal prawf blynyddol llawn ar gyfer Cymru gyfan. Am y tro cyntaf, bydd yn ofynnol hefyd i holl ffermwyr Cymru brofi pob anifail cyn ei symud. Bydd hynny'n dwysáu ein profion ar wartheg ac yn gwasgu ar y clefyd hwn.

[8] Yr ydym wedi bod yn gwneud gwaith ychwanegol ar brofion hwyr. Ganol y llynedd, yr oedd 711 o fuchesi yn hwyr ar gyfer prawf TB. Erbyn diwedd mis Mehefin eleni, mae'r ffigur i lawr i 38 o fuchesi sy'n hwyr ar gyfer prawf TB. Yr ydym hefyd wedi gostwng y targed ar gyfer symud anifeiliaid sydd wedi eu profi'n positif o'r fferm o 20 niwrnod i 10 niwrnod.

[9] Yn olaf, ar iawndal, yn y flwyddyn ariannol ddiwethaf, talwyd mymryn o dan £24 miliwn i ffermwyr y gwaredwyd eu gwartheg oherwydd TB. Gwyddoch fy mod wedi cwblhau'r ymgynghoriad ar newid y gyfundrefn talu iawndal. Yr ydym yn edrych ar yr atebion i'r ymgynghoriad hwnnw ar hyn o bryd, a byddaf yn gwneud cyhoeddiad pellach ar y newid yn y ddeddfwriaeth yn nhyrnwyr yr hydref.

9.40 a.m.

[10] **Alun Davies:** Diolch am hynny, Weinidog. Yr ydym yn gwerthfawrogi'r adroddiad hwnnw. Bydd yn help mawr inni wrth inni ystyried y mater. Yn gyntaf, wrth ddechrau'r sesiwn hon, pan wnaethoch eich datganiad yn y Siambr ar y rhaglen hon rai misoedd yn ôl, yr oedd tipyn o feirniadaeth o'r rhaglen ac yr oedd tipyn o'r feirniadaeth honno ynglŷn â'r ffordd yr ydych yn ei gweithredu. Mae pobl yn gofyn pam yr ydych yn rhuthro i ladd moch daear heb ystyried unrhyw opsiynau eraill. Mae rhai pobl yn

As the TB health check programme ends this year, the question arises: what sort of cattle testing will we undertake after 2011? The European Commission's opinion is clear that the current testing approach in Wales—which has historically been done on a parish level—is inadequate, as the test areas are too small. I have therefore decided, since presenting the written report to you, that from 2010 onwards, we will extend the annual testing by holding a full annual test for the whole of Wales. That will also, for the first time ever, require every farmer in Wales to test every animal before it can be moved. That will intensify our testing of cattle and increase the pressure on this bovine disease.

We have been doing extra work on overdue tests. In the middle of last year, 711 herds were overdue for a TB test. By the end of June this year, that figure has come down to 38 herds that are overdue for a TB test. We have also reduced the target for moving animals that have tested positive from the farm from 20 days to 10 days.

Finally, with regard to compensation, in the previous financial year, just under £24 million was paid out to farmers for cattle that had been disposed of because of TB. You will know that I have completed the consultation on changing the compensation payment system. We are currently looking at the responses to that consultation, and I will make a further announcement on the change in legislation in the autumn term.

**Alun Davies:** Thank you for that, Minister. We appreciate that report. It will prove a great help to us when we consider the matter. First, as we start this session, when you made your statement in the Chamber on this programme some months ago, there was quite a lot of criticism of the programme and quite a lot of that criticism was about how you are implementing it. People are asking why you are rushing in to culling badgers without considering any other options. Some people are saying that you are doing this

dweud eich bod yn gwneud hyn heb wir ystyried bod opsiynau eraill ar gael.

without really considering that there are other options.

[11] **Elin Jones:** Pan glywaf y feirniadaeth honno teimlaf fy mod i a'r Llywodraeth yn cael ein beirniadu ar gam oherwydd credaf mai'r peth diwethaf yr ydym wedi ei wneud yw rhuthro i wneud hyn. Efallai ei bod yn bwysig imi atgoffa'r pwyllgor imi wneud cyhoeddiad ym mis Mawrth neu Ebrill y llynedd ynglŷn â'r rhaglen waredu yn ei chyfanrwydd a nodais yn y cyhoeddiad hwnnw y byddem yn edrych ar wybodaeth bellach ynglŷn â sut, ac os, y byddai gwaredu moch daear mewn rhan o Gymru yn gallu bod yn rhan o'r cynllun hwn. Gwneuthum y penderfyniad mewn egwyddor bryd hynny i ymchwilio ymhellach i hynny, ond cymerodd flwyddyn wedyn imi ddod yn ôl i'r Cynulliad gyda'm penderfyniad ar sail yr ymchwil pellach hwnnw, ym mis Ebrill eleni. Gwnaethpwyd ymchwil ac asesiad llawn o'r gwahanol opsiynau o ran sefydlu un ardal ar gyfer gwaredu dwys yng Nghymru a oedd yn cynnwys gwaredu moch daear. Felly, byddwn yn dweud yn sicr na fu inni rithro i wneud hyn a'n bod wedi cymryd tystiolaeth wyddonol ac eang ynglŷn â sut yn union y dylem symud ymlaen a gweithredu. Os caf, gofynnaf i Christianne ymhelaethu rhywfaint ar yr opsiynau yr edrychasom arnynt yn ystod y cyfnod a arweiniodd at y penderfyniad i sefydlu'r ardal ar gyfer gweithredu dwys.

**Elin Jones:** When I hear that criticism, I feel that it is an unfair criticism of me and the Government because I think that the last thing that we have done is rush into this. Perhaps it is important for me to remind the committee that I made an announcement in March or April last year about the whole eradication programme and I noted in that announcement that we would look at further information on how, and if, culling badgers in an area of Wales could be part of this plan. I took the decision in principle at that time to undertake further research on this, but it was then a full year before I came back to the Assembly with my decision, based on that further research, in April this year. Research and a full assessment were undertaken of the different options in relation to establishing an intensive eradication area in Wales that would include a badger cull. So, I would say that we certainly did not rush into this. We looked at scientific and wide ranging evidence to gauge how exactly we should proceed and act. If I may, I will ask Christianne to expand somewhat on the options that we looked at during the period that led to the decision to establish an area for intense action.

[12] **Dr Glossop:** Good morning. The work that has been carried out over the last 18 months has involved a number of different aspects. One has been a detailed study of the epidemiology of TB across the whole of Wales, to get an understanding of our endemic areas where there is clear evidence of circulating infection, not just in our cattle population, but in our wildlife population. That is one piece of work that has been ongoing. Another thing that has happened over the last two years is ongoing analysis of the results of the randomised badger culling trial that took place in England. You will recall that, two years ago, the independent scientific group gave its initial report. There have been two subsequent papers analysing the results of that, which have given improved evidence on the benefits that can be attributed to removing wildlife reservoirs of infection. So, that is another piece of evidence that has been available to us over the last—

[13] **Alun Davies:** May I just stop you there?

[14] **Dr Glossop:** Yes.

[15] **Alun Davies:** Sorry to interrupt your flow. Would it be possible for you to give us a note on those two subsequent reports?

[16] **Dr Glossop:** Yes, of course. The third thing that we have been doing, specific to Wales, is looking at the options for dealing with the reservoir of infection within our wildlife

population. If you look at it in simple terms, there are four ways that you could deal with this. One is that you could ignore the wildlife reservoir of infection, and we know to our cost that doing that has, in part, resulted in the escalation of disease in some parts of Wales. Another option would be to attempt a vaccination programme of the wildlife population. We are working very closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to try to understand the benefits of vaccination. I should say that badger vaccination, at the moment, is not available. The badger vaccine will be available in about 12 months' time, but as an injectable vaccine, which would involve cage trapping badgers and vaccinating them. We should remember if we were to do that, that a proportion of the badgers are already infected with *Mycobacterium bovis*. For those badgers, vaccination would have no benefit. Therefore, the modelling of that approach has suggested to us that it is not an appropriate option in endemic areas of Wales for now. That does not mean that we are ruling out the role of vaccination, and we are looking at other applications of it, for example, in areas where we have indication that our badgers are clean. In those areas, it might be a good thing to protect them from the introduction of infection. So, modelling for the use of vaccine only for badgers has suggested to us that that is not an appropriate course of action in endemic areas in Wales. However, we are not ruling it out for the future.

[17] Another option might be to catch badgers, test them for TB, vaccinate the clean ones and destroy the ones that appear to be infected. That is a tidy description; it is a good notion. There are some limitations to the technology, however, particularly with regard to the tests that are available. We would have to use a test that would produce a result quickly, because we would have a badger in a cage and we would want to release that badger into the same environment. So, it would have to be a test that could be carried out effectively by the side of the cage in which the badger was caught. We would have to anaesthetise the badger to get a blood sample. The test has a low sensitivity, and less than 50 per cent of badgers that are not highly infected would be identified as infected using the test. We would therefore be missing half of the infected badgers, effectively. In fact, we would vaccinate them and we would be lulled into a false sense of security that they were not infected. When we studied that combination approach, we were disappointed to see that it would not benefit us. The modelling work that we commissioned from the Central Science Laboratory suggested that that approach would serve to increase the incidence of infection in badgers, because of the resultant stirring up of the population.

[18] The third option has been to consider whether it is feasible to remove badgers from an area where we have evidence of circulating infection in wildlife. That modelling exercise, taking the revised outcome of the randomised badger culling trial, has shown us that we have the potential to make a real difference if we approach wildlife in that way. There is one very important difference between what was carried out in the randomised badger culling trial and what we propose, which is, in addition to considering the wildlife reservoir of infection, that we will also work to improve the cattle measures in the area, so that we will clamp down hard on infection in cattle and do everything that we can to protect such areas from the introduction of infected cattle, and, alongside that, deal with the wildlife reservoir of infection. That has not been done before at all in Great Britain, and that is the approach that we propose to take. So, over the last 18 months, we have been working up those plans.

[19] **Alun Davies:** Thank you for that, it is very useful. As you may be aware, I represent north Pembrokeshire and perhaps have a more personal interest in some of these issues than would otherwise be the case. What is said to me in that area is that, as a Government, you have not sufficiently examined the option of vaccination and that you have not given sufficient consideration to the practical possibilities of vaccination. You said in that outline that vaccination was not appropriate for now in endemic areas, but that it is not ruled out for the future. You did not say why vaccination is not appropriate.

[20] **Dr Glossop:** We have a vaccine that we need to inject into badgers, which is

cumbersome. In about five years' time, it is likely that an oral bait vaccine will be available, which will be a lot more practical. That is one aspect. Our modelling—and modelling carried out by DEFRA, which, you will be aware, is also considering this option—has shown that if you vaccinate a population of badgers every year for five years, by the fifth, sixth and seventh years, you will start to reduce the incidence of infection in badgers. The hope is that that would have an indirect impact on the incidence of infection in cattle, but it is a lengthy process. We have a disease epidemic in Wales that is escalating. You have all seen the figures, and you can see that we have had a dramatic increase in the incidence of infection. Quite honestly, we cannot afford to wait five, six or seven years to see, first, a reduction in the incidence of infection in badgers and then to hope that that will have an impact on infection in cattle. That would be our main rationale behind reviewing that as not being the appropriate option.

9.50 a.m.

[21] **Alun Davies:** Would it take five or six years because the vaccine is not all that effective or because it would take that amount of time to cover the population?

[22] **Dr Glossop:** No vaccine is 100 per cent effective, as I am sure that you appreciate. However, we will be vaccinating all badgers, some of which will be infected. Vaccinating an infected animal does not make it better, and it does not provide it with the protection that it needs. Those animals could continue to shed *Mycobacterium bovis*. The reason why it takes such a long time is that you have to work your way through the population. Eventually, the infected badgers will die off, and the balance between infected and protected badgers will shift, so that you have a higher number that are protected.

[23] **Elin Jones:** I just wish to make the point that the advice that was put to me and the options that Christianne has described are all in the public domain. As part of our consultation on the legislation, we have put that advice in the public domain for your constituents in north Pembrokeshire to scrutinise.

[24] **Alun Davies:** They have read it, Minister, let me tell you.

[25] **Peter Black:** To follow up on that point, as I understand it, you have just said that the vaccination programme may have an effect, but that you could not guarantee that it would have the follow-on effect of reducing infection cattle. That is what you said, is it not?

[26] **Dr Glossop:** We simply do not know. It would be reasonable to assume that that is the case.

[27] **Peter Black:** I understood that the whole reason behind this being done in this area in north Pembrokeshire is that you consider there to be a clear link, and that the reason for effectively clearing north Pembrokeshire of badgers was so that you were able to remove a possible source of infection to cattle. However, now you are saying that you are not sure whether badgers are a source of infection for cattle.

[28] **Dr Glossop:** I did not mean to give that impression. What I was saying was that we believe that there is a link in areas of Wales that have endemic TB. These are areas where cattle herds are continually being tested, cattle are being removed, and infection is still arriving in the herd. In those cases, where we can reduce the contact between infected badgers and cattle, we can work towards driving down the incidence of infection and re-infection. It will not work unless we get rid of the infected cattle as well because you have got to do the two things together. However, what no-one has been able to demonstrate, because it has not been done yet, is whether successively vaccinating badgers over a five-year period—which, from a modelling perspective, should reduce the incidence of infection in badgers—will, in



itself, have an impact on cattle. The modelling would suggest that, after a period of five to seven years, you might get a reduction in incidence, but it is something that has not been followed through yet.

[29] **Peter Black:** You would not carry out that five to seven-year vaccination programme in isolation, would you? You would also be dealing with the cattle at the same time.

[30] **Dr Glossop:** If I were introducing that sort of policy, that is correct. That is not necessarily the case in other parts of Great Britain.

[31] **Peter Black:** The cycle of infection, re-infection and so on would surely be broken by such a vaccination programme. Is that the logic of that?

[32] **Dr Glossop:** Yes, that is the logic. However, results of the randomised badger-culling trial showed a benefit in the reduction of new breakdowns in cattle herds very quickly, within the first one to two years of badger culling. So, you get the benefit much quicker.

[33] **Alun Davies:** I am sorry to keep returning to these issues, but it is important that we flush out some of these problems. In an earlier answer, Christianne, you mentioned that, in order to test badgers, you would need to be able to test in situ and very quickly, and then to either vaccinate or destroy. I ask this as a lay person: is there any possibility of doing that differently? You mentioned the importance of doing that in situ, but we can use global positioning systems to locate ourselves very accurately. Would it be possible to take the badgers away, test them using a more accurate method, and then either vaccinate or destroy and reintroduce the vaccinated badgers to where they were first caught?

[34] **Dr Glossop:** You could do that. You can imagine that if you anaesthetised them and took samples at a central location, you might have a better control over matters and you are right in that you could then perhaps hold the badgers for a day or two to get the results. However, that is quite disruptive of a wildlife population. It does happen at Woodchester Park in Gloucestershire: animals are caught, held overnight and released in the morning. That is done every quarter in that area, but we would be attempting the same in a large area and we would have to identify a suitable centre to which we could transport those animals. That is a fairly complicated mechanism. You could then use a test that takes a longer time to produce the results, but that test is still not perfect, so you would not be able to identify every infected animal.

[35] **Alun Davies:** We will move on to another issue in a moment, but I would like to pursue this for the moment. I appreciate that it would be disruptive and that it would not be perfect, but surely it would be less disruptive to wildlife than a wholesale cull. While we accept and understand that these issues are complex, no-one here, or in wider society, is looking for easy answers; we are looking for good answers and the most effective way of treating this disease with due regard for animal welfare. So, if there are alternatives, then clearly you have a responsibility to consider those alternatives and, as a Government, to use the resources at your disposal to investigate those alternatives and to create ways of making them less complex and more achievable.

[36] **Dr Glossop:** I accept that. Another piece of technology that we do not have, but that could be worth developing, relates to working out how to take a blood sample from a badger without having to give it a general anaesthetic. We could benefit from a different design of cage, which is not yet available, but could be in the future. The best advice from our wildlife experts was that removing animals and taking them to a central location would not give us the level of improved sensitivity in the testing and the required outcome to make the whole process worthwhile at this stage, given the limits in technology. Every stage of the process is complicated and makes it less likely that we will get the desired result. However, we remain

open to all new developments and possibilities.

[37] **Alun Davies:** I will bring in Brynle first and then we will go to Rhodri Glyn.

[38] **Brynle Williams:** On the testing of badgers, I am concerned that we are very concerned about badgers' welfare, but you said that you would need to vaccinate for possibly five to six years, and we would have to get 100 per cent. You only need one animal in an area shedding infection to cause a problem. I do not know how long TB takes to kill a badger from the onset of infection, but in the meantime it is shedding. What I am trying to get at is that we would still be left with a reservoir of infection—not even vaccination is 100 per cent. I am concerned that if we go down the vaccination route—and we have to consider vaccination, because it has a major role to play—we are not focusing on the first objective of this, which is to clear out the TB completely. What concerns me above all is that this is a zoonosis; it is a disease transmissible to man. I have met several people over the last fortnight who have contracted TB. I was in hospital recently, and the first thing that the specialist asked me was whether I had been abroad or in touch with someone with TB.

10.00 a.m.

[39] So, it is obvious that it is important there. This is an urgent issue. We need to get on and, as you are, run the testing, give the vaccine and everything else in parallel. I would like to know how accurate the figures in the vaccination models are, because many people are pinning their hopes on vaccination. I would love it to work. I need to declare that I am a farmer who is in the area where TB testing takes place. My herd is tested regularly for TB.

[40] **Alun Davies:** We guessed that you are a farmer, Brynle. [*Laughter.*]

[41] **Dr Glossop:** Modelling is not the real thing, and that is why you have to be very careful with the results of modelling. You need to make sure that you put all the right parameters and figures into the model. That is why it is worth going to experts to have that work carried out. The modelling that has been carried out on the benefits of vaccination, which yielded benefits in the incidence of infection among badgers after five to seven years, has been carried out by the best people in Great Britain. I have no doubt that those models are as good as they can be.

[42] The vaccine itself has been trialled on a very small scale in badgers already, but no-one has looked yet in the field at the relationship between the long-term vaccination of badgers and the incidence of infection in cattle. So I cannot answer the question. That is what people are pinning their hopes on. It sounds very logical indeed, but it is a long-term programme. That would be the main drawback for us in Wales, when we have an escalating epidemic. As you say, it is a zoonosis; it does infect humans, but it is now spilling over into other types of mammals in Wales. We really need to get on with this. As the vaccine becomes more usable, and certainly once we have an oral bait vaccine, that would seem like a really good way of protecting populations. However, let us not forget that that does not treat infected badgers.

[43] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Hoffwn ddechrau gan gyfeirio at eich sylwadau agoriadol, Gadeirydd, pan ddywedasoch fod pryder cyffredinol bod y Gweinidog wedi rhuthro i mewn i'r gweithgaredd hwn o ddifa moch daear. Nid wyf yn ymwybodol o'r feirniadaeth honno. Mae cefnogaeth gyffredinol yn y Cynulliad i'r hyn y mae'r Gweinidog yn ei wneud. Mae lleisiau unigol **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I will start by referring to your opening remarks, Chair, in which you said that there was general concern that the Minister had rushed into the implementation of badger culling. I am not aware of such criticism. There is general support in the Assembly for what the Minister is doing. Some voices oppose it, but the truth is that most people are glad that we

yn gwrthwynebu, ond y gwir yw bod y rhan fwyaf o bobl yn falch bod gennym Weinidog bellach sydd wedi gwneud y penderfyniad anodd hwn. Y feirniadaeth yw bod oedi wedi bod o ran gweithredu, ac nid bod y Gweinidog wedi rhuthro i weithredu. O ran yr hyn a ddywedaso ch ynghylch y ffaith eich bod yn cynrychioli gogledd sir Benfro, yr wyf yn byw yn weddol agos at ogledd sir Benfro, ac nid wyf yn ymwybodol o feirniadaeth o'r fan honno ychwaith. Credaf fod pobl yn cydnabod y sefyllfa erbyn hyn.

O ran lles anifeiliaid yn gyffredinol, y buchesi sy'n cael eu heffeithio, y moch daear a bywyd gwyllt yn gyffredinol, mae pobl yn sylweddoli bod rhaid gwneud rhywbeth. Mae pobl yn derbyn bod brechu ar hyn o bryd yn gwbl anymarferol fel dull o reoli. Mae cwestiwn ariannol yn codi hefyd ynghylch yr effaith y mae hyn yn ei gael ar wariant cyhoeddus yng Nghymru. Byddwn yn dweud bod y rhan fwyaf o bobl yn falch, Gweinidog, eich bod wedi gwneud y penderfyniad ac wedi dechrau gweithredu ar y mater hwn.

[44] Symudaf at brofion hwyr. Yr wyf yn falch bod y nifer ohonynt wedi disgyn erbyn hyn i 38, oherwydd 48 oedd y ffigur ddiwedd mis Mai. Felly, mewn mis yr ydych wedi lleihau'r nifer o brofion hwyr o 10. Fodd bynnag, mae hynny'n fater gwirioneddol ddifrifol i'r sawl sy'n cael eu heffeithio gan y profion hwyr ar y 38 o fuchesi hynny sydd dal heb eu profi, ac mae'n cael effaith mawr ar ffermydd y bobl hynny. Pryd y bydd y profion hwyr hynny i gyd wedi cael eu gwneud?

[45] **Elin Jones:** Diolch am eich sylwadau a'r cwestiwn. Mae'n bwysig inni gofnodi'r pwysau ariannol sydd ar y Llywodraeth hon ynghylch talu iawndal. Mae hynny'n gysylltiedig â'r ffaith bod y clefyd hwn yn dwysau a bod y niferoedd yr effeithir arnynt yn cynyddu'n sylweddol iawn. Yn ei hatebion ar frechu, cyfeiriodd Christianne at y ffaith y byddwn o bosibl, mewn pum i saith mlynedd, yn gweld effaith ar y clefyd ei hun mewn gwartheg yn dilyn y system frechu, os mai gwneud hynny oedd y penderfyniad.

[46] Y llynedd, bu i mi ddweud ein bod yn talu £24 miliwn ar iawndal. Ein hamcan

now have a Minister who has taken this difficult decision. The criticism is that there has been a delay in implementation, not that the Minister has rushed into it. With regard to what you said about representing north Pembrokeshire, I live quite near that area and I am not aware of any criticism coming from there either. I believe that people recognise the situation now.

In relation to animal welfare, the cattle that are affected, the badgers and wildlife in general, people realise that we must take action. People understand that vaccination is completely impractical at the moment as a control method. There is also a financial issue in relation to the impact that this has on public expenditure in Wales. I would say that most people are glad, Minister, that you have taken this decision and that you have started to take action on this.

I will turn to overdue tests. I am pleased that the number of those has now come down to 38, from 48, which was the figure at the end of May. You have therefore reduced the number of overdue tests by 10. However, it is a genuinely serious issue for those who are affected by overdue tests for those 38 cows that still have not been tested, and it is having a significant effect on those people's farms. When will all those overdue tests have been dealt with?

**Elin Jones:** Thank you for those comments and for your question. It is important for us to note the financial pressure on the Government in relation to paying compensation. That is related to the fact that this disease is intensifying and the numbers of those affected are increasing. In her responses on vaccination, Christianne made reference to the fact that, in five to seven years' time, we will possibly see an impact on the disease itself in cattle following the vaccination programme, if it was decided to do that.

Last year, I said that we were paying £24 million in compensation. We estimate that we

yw y byddwn yn talu £30 miliwn eleni. Erbyn 2013-14, gall hynny fod yn £80 miliwn ar iawndal o ystyried y tuedd yn y clefyd ar hyn o bryd. Felly, mae'n bwysig ein bod ni yn cymryd—am sawl gwahanol reswm, ond yn cynnwys gwarchod cyllideb Llywodraeth y Cynulliad—camau brys i leihau'r clefyd hwn. Mae'r elfen bywyd gwyllt yn bwysig i wneud hynny, ond mae'r elfennau o ran gwartheg, fel y bu i chi ddweud, llawn mor bwysig.

will pay £30 million this year. By 2013-14, that could be £80 million on compensation given the current trend in the disease. Therefore, it is important that we take—for various reasons, but including the need to protect the budget of the Assembly Government—steps to reduce this disease quickly. In doing that, the wildlife element is important, but the elements in relation to cattle are just as important, as you said.

[47] Yr ydym wedi gweld lleihad yn y nifer o brofion sydd dros amser ar ffermydd. Mae 38 dros amser yn awr. Efallai byddai'n syniad da i Dafydd neu Christianne egluro i chi pa sefyllfaoedd sy'n arwain at brofion yn mynd dros amser. Mae rhywfaint o hynny oherwydd materion yn ymwneud â'r ochr llywodraethol, mae rhywfaint yn ymwneud â'r ffermydd eu hunain sydd yn methu, neu yn gwrthod, cydymffurfio. Felly, mae cynnwys y 38—neu'r 700 fel yr oedd y llynedd—yn amrywio.

We have seen a reduction in the number of overdue tests on farms. Thirty-eight are overdue at the moment. Perhaps it would be a good idea for Dafydd or Christianne to explain to you the situations that cause tests to be overdue. Some of that is because of governance matters, some is due to the farms themselves failing, or refusing, to conform. Therefore, the situation of the 38—or the 700 as it was last year—varies.

[48] **Mr Glyn:** The majority of the remaining 38 tests are for smallholders—people with small numbers of cattle who are not farming commercially and have not thought about the need to test those cattle. Therefore, they do not have the required handling facilities and do not understand the need for testing.

[49] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** A fedraf eich stopio chi? Soniasoch am ganran. Faint o ffermydd masnachol sy'n dal i ddisgwyl am brofion? Yr oedd y ffigwr yn 700, ac yr oedd hwnnw'n peri gofid mawr iawn. Yr wyf yn cydnabod eich bod wedi gwneud llawer o waith i ddod â hynny i lawr i 38, ond os yw rhai ohonynt yn ffermydd masnachol, mae'n broblem enfawr os yw'r profion hyn yn hwyr.

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** May I stop you there? You mentioned a percentage. How many commercial farms are still awaiting tests? The figure was 700, and that was a cause of great concern. I recognise that you have done a considerable amount of work to bring that number down to 38, but if some are commercial farms, it is an enormous problem if those tests are overdue.

[50] **Mr Glyn:** I do not have the exact percentage with me. However, from the feedback that we have received from Animal Health, you are looking at one such farm. It is important to understand that none of these farms would be able to trade any animals at all and would be under restrictions.

[51] Of the 38 cases, Animal Health have booked 20 of those tests and the others have all received warning letters, and so are going through the legal process to get the test done. There is an agreed procedure in place between local authorities, Animal Health and the Welsh Assembly Government regarding how to deal with these overdue cases, which goes as far as the step of removing those animals for testing.

[52] In some of these cases, we have had to take our own kit onto these holdings to carry out these tests and then charge for the facility, just to get the test done.

[53] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch yn **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Thank you very

fawr. Mae hynny'n newyddion da iawn o ran y cynnydd gwirioneddol yr ydych yn ei wneud. Yr ydych wedi sôn, Gweinidog, am y targed newydd o 10 diwrnod, sydd wedi gostwng o 20 diwrnod. Mae targedau yn bethau da iawn, ond beth yn union ydych yn ei wneud i'ch galluogi i gyrraedd y targed newydd hwn? Beth ydych wedi newid o ran y ffordd yr ydych yn gweithredu?

[54] **Elin Jones:** Gofynnaf i Dafydd i egluro'r prosesau sydd wedi'u cyflwyno ar gyfer cwrdd â hynny. Mae sawl elfen yn dilyn prawf—mae'r milfeddyg yn rhoi gwybodaeth am y prawf, gwerthuso'r anifail ac yna trefnu gwaredu'r anifail. Gofynnaf i Dafydd egluro'r sefyllfa o ran cyrraedd y targed newydd.

much. That is good news in relation to the real improvement that you have made. You have mentioned, Minister, the new target of 10 days, which has been reduced from 20 days. Targets are good things, but what exactly are you doing to enable you to reach this new target? What have you changed with regard to the way in which you operate?

**Elin Jones:** I will ask Dafydd to explain the processes that have been put in place in order to meet that target. Several elements follow the test—the veterinarian gives information about the test, does a valuation of the animal and then makes arrangements to dispose of the animal. I will ask Dafydd to explain the situation with regard to meeting the new target.

[55] **Mr Glyn:** As the Minister explained, there are three key elements before removing the animal. The first is getting the information back from the veterinarian regarding how many reactors were found. Since April this year, veterinarians have been told that they have to inform the office within 24 hours. That is one of the key steps to get things moving within the Animal Health office.

[56] The second element is to complete the valuation, and we have worked with the auctioneers' associations and the valuers that we have on our lists to ensure that we have enough valuers to carry out that task in a timely manner.

10.10 a.m.

[57] The final bit is the removal and slaughter of those animals, and we are working on a key element at the moment. We are going out to tender in August on the removal and slaughter of TB reactors, bringing in the abattoirs and giving them the responsibility for organising the haulage and the slaughter, which will streamline that process. Currently, we are achieving just under 35 per cent within 10 working days. It is important to understand that the target has changed in two ways. It has come down from 20 working days to 10 working days, but the previous target was from the moment the Animal Health office was informed by the veterinarian, which could add a few days; the new target is from the day of the second test. So, it has been tightened in two ways. We are achieving 35 per cent across Wales within 10 working days. The offices in Cardiff and Caernarfon are achieving around 70 per cent, and the main area that we are now concentrating on is the Carmarthen area, where at least 1,000 animals a month are being slaughtered because of TB. That is the area in which you would expect the greatest amount of work.

[58] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yr wyf yn ymwybodol iawn o'r ffigur hwnnw gan fy mod yn cynrychioli etholaeth yn sir Gaerfyrddin, ac yr wyf yn falch o glywed am y cynnydd hwnnw. Mae angen canmol y Llywodraeth a'r swyddogion sydd yn gyfrifol am gyflawni hynny. Mae'n newyddion da iawn i ardaloedd fel sir Gaerfyrddin.

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I am very aware of that figure as I represent a constituency in Carmarthenshire, and I am glad to hear about that increase. The Government and officials responsible for achieving that are to be congratulated. It is very good news for areas such as Carmarthenshire.

[59] A ydych yn bwriadu cyflwyno mesurau i'w wneud yn orfodol bod buchesi neu wartheg unigol yn cael eu profi cyn y gellid eu symud? Mae hyn yn broblem fawr. Os oes gwartheg sydd wedi'u heintio yn cael eu symud, mae'n gallu golygu bod buchesi newydd yn cael eu heffeithio'n sydyn.

Do you intend to introduce measures that would make it compulsory for herds or individual cattle to be tested before they could be moved? This is a big problem. If infected cattle are moved, it can mean that new herds are affected suddenly.

[60] **Elin Jones:** Mae'r profion hynny eisoes yn bodoli ar gyfer yr ardaloedd sydd â'r broblem ddwysaf. Fel y dywedais yn fy nghyflwyniad, o fis Ionawr 2010, am flwyddyn, bydd profi blynyddol ar gyfer Cymru gyfan, a bydd pob buwch sydd yn cael ei symud yng Nghymru yn gorfod cael prawf cyn symud.

**Elin Jones:** Those tests already exist for the most seriously affected areas. As I said in my introduction, from January 2010, for a year, there will be annual testing throughout Wales, and every animal moved in Wales will have to have a pre-movement test.

[61] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** A ydych yn bwriadu parhau â hynny, neu arbrawf yw?

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Do you intend to continue with that, or is it an experiment?

[62] **Elin Jones:** Nid yw'n arbrawf; mae'n rhan o'r symudiad y byddwn yn ei wneud fel Llywodraeth oddi wrth y polisi presennol o glustnodi plwyfi ar gyfer profi blynyddol, profi bob dwy flynedd, neu brofi bob bedair blynedd. Mae'r Comisiwn Ewropeaidd yn anhapus gyda'r polisi hwnnw, sydd yn weithredol yng Nghymru a Lloegr ac, mae'n siŵr, yn yr Alban. Mae'n credu bod yr ardal ddaearyddol yn rhy fach. Felly, byddwn yn edrych ar ganlyniadau'r archwiliad iechyd TB eleni, sydd yn profi pob buches yng Nghymru. Unwaith eto, y flwyddyn nesaf, bydd prawf blynyddol ar bob buches yng Nghymru. Unwaith y bydd gennym y pictiwr llawn o ran y clefyd, bydd y Llywodraeth yn gwneud penderfyniad ar y math o brofi ac ardaloedd sydd yn gymwys o 2011 ymlaen.

**Elin Jones:** It is not an experiment; it is part of our moving away as a Government from the present policy of earmarking parishes for annual testing, biennial testing or four-yearly testing. The European Commission is unhappy with that policy, which is operating in Wales and England and, probably, in Scotland. It believes that the geographical area is too small. Therefore, we will look at the results of the TB health check this year, which tests every herd in Wales. Once again, next year, there will be a yearly test on every herd in Wales. Once we have the full picture with regard to the disease, the Government will take a decision on the kind of testing and areas that are appropriate from 2011 onwards.

[63] **Brynle Williams:** Yr wyf yn falch ofnadwy y bydd y profion yn digwydd yn flynyddol. Mae hynny'n gam ardderchog ymlaen.

**Brynle Williams:** I am very glad that the tests will be done annually. That is an excellent step forward.

[64] Mae prinder gwartheg llaeth i raddau yng Nghymru, ac mae llawer yn cael eu mewnfario o Loegr. Sut ydych yn penderfynu ar ba anifeiliaid sydd angen eu profi cyn dod dros y ffin? Mae llawer o ffermydd reit ar y ffin.

There is a shortage of dairy cattle in Wales, and a great deal are imported from England. How do you decide which animals need to be tested before crossing the border? There are many farms right on the border.

[65] **Dr Glossop:** Now that we have reached the decision to move to annual testing in Wales next year and to introduce pre-movement testing in Wales, the next very obvious thing to consider is the movement of animals into Wales from Scotland and England. That is

exactly what we are looking at now, to ensure that we protect Wales's position, while facilitating trade. As you have pointed out, we need to be able to allow animals to move, but not with the added risk that that presents. So, that piece of work is now being dealt with.

[66] **Elin Jones:** It is important to remember, of course, that those animals in the areas where TB is endemic in England, in yearly and two-yearly testing parishes, are already subject to pre-movement testing. So, any movement into Wales from those quite large areas in England would already be subject to pre-movement testing.

[67] **Brynle Williams:** You gave us a lot of figures, Minister, earlier on, but what has been the scale of the compensation payments made to date in relation to the 2009-10 budget?

[68] **Elin Jones:** On the budget for 2009-10, I will have to ask Dafydd whether he has the latest figures. If we look at the escalation in the slaughter of cattle—it is just a figure that I seem to have right in front of me at this stage—and compare January to March this year with January to March last year, we had 2,416 cattle slaughtered last year and, this year, in the same period, we had 3,705 cattle slaughtered. So, that is the escalation of the disease in two comparable periods. I will ask Dafydd, in a moment, to update you on compensation payments.

[69] To preface what Dafydd will say, we have been consulting on a new compensation regime. We have done the consultation and we will look to introduce and consult on legislation in the autumn term. However, we have put in place changes to the administration of our valuation and compensation scheme in Wales, which has tightened up considerably on the valuation of individual animals: for example, the average payment for pedigree animals in 2006 was just under £5,000, but by March 2009, the average was £3,150. We have introduced monitor valuers whose role it is to ensure that the individual valuations are close to the actual value of the animal. We have put a lot of effort into the control of valuations as the Audit Committee's and the Auditor General for Wales's reports a few years ago were critical of all of that.

[70] I take the opportunity to say, at this stage, that the fact that the valuations have been considerably tightened by this Assembly Government causes consternation to a number of farmers. I draw your attention to a legal challenge that the Assembly Government faced earlier this year. A valuation for a bull was agreed at £28,000 by the valuer and the Assembly Government, but the farmer, who was expecting a valuation of £1 million, sought a judicial review. We successfully defeated the judicial challenge by the farmer. If our valuation is hurting some farmers, or supposedly hurting some farmers, it shows that we have significantly tightened up the valuation system that, in previous years, may not have been tight enough. Dafydd might be able to say something on the compensation paid to date or, if not, we can update the committee on that.

[71] **Mr Glyn:** By the end of May this year, we had paid just over £6 million in compensation.

[72] **Brynle Williams:** Obviously, valuation was very much a bone of contention before you came to post, Minister. I am glad that we are finally getting down to dealing with it now and I hope that everybody is realising that, although we want a fair valuation, getting on top of the disease is the most important thing. You have quoted a figure of £1 million. One could argue that a pedigree bull might be worth such a sum, but I do not know, so I will not go into it.

10.20 a.m.

[73] **Alun Davies:** We do not need to argue over that poor creature at the moment.

[*Laughter.*]

[74] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** If you have a bull worth more than £1 million, build a moat around it.

[75] **Brynle Williams:** You could have a duck house in the moat. [*Laughter.*]

[76] **Alun Davies:** You could claim for cleaning it, too. Brynle, can we move on?

[77] **Brynle Williams:** Certainly, Chair.

[78] What are the key findings from your consultation on the TB compensation arrangements, and how will you utilise them to develop future compensation arrangements?

[79] **Elin Jones:** The consultation is complete, and the feedback is currently being analysed. I have not taken any view as yet on the responses to the consultation. As I said earlier, I will look to introduce and then consult on detailed legislation in the autumn term. I am, therefore, not in a position to give you a sneak preview at this point, Brynle.

[80] **Brynle Williams:** I just hope that, given the extra biosecurity and what have you on farms, these tests can at least be carried out with normal cross-compliance checks, instead of having additional officers across the land once again. Not only that, there is a saving as well. However, as you said, Minister, you are not going to provide us with a sneak preview at this time.

[81] **Alun Davies:** I am going to bring Peter Black in next on husbandry issues before completing our session on the intensive action pilot area.

[82] **Peter Black:** In your oral statement on 24 March, Minister, you referred to the option of linking compensation payments to good disease prevention principles. What other actions are you taking to promote the principles of good husbandry and biosecurity?

[83] **Elin Jones:** As I said to Brynle on the issue of compensation and the link to good on-farm biosecurity practice, it is an issue that I will take a decision on by the autumn term. Perhaps Christianne can expand on some of the work that has been done on biosecurity in the intensive biosecurity area.

[84] **Dr Glossop:** Our approach to this disease comes under a number of headings. One is to, first of all, keep infection out of clean areas and away from clean farms, so biosecurity is an important aspect of that work. It is important to remember that, even in our endemic areas, we have farms that are free from infection, and we need to work closely with them. I am not sure that everybody has the same understanding of the meaning of the word 'biosecurity'. Some farmers might consider that to mean a bucket of disinfectant, whereas others will take a much more comprehensive approach.

[85] Three or four years ago, we carried out a study in Pembrokeshire to try to quantify biosecurity, to develop what was, effectively, a scoring tool so that we could evaluate a farm's biosecurity and then provide the farmer with advice to improve biosecurity while recognising that every farming operation is different. So, while attempting to limit the risk of introducing infection onto a farm, you have to recognise that some farms need to buy in replacement heifers, for example.

[86] The scoring tool was developed with the Royal Veterinary College—which now has an outstation at Gelli Aur, the dairy development centre in Carmarthen—and with local private veterinarians in Pembrokeshire. That work produced the scoring tool, which, I am



pleased to say, is now being rolled out in north Wales, where protecting against the introduction of infection is an important piece of the jigsaw. The regional eradication board in north Wales is working with private veterinarians to roll out that scoring tool to farmers in those parts of north Wales that are between areas where we have disease and where we believe we do not have a lot of infection, effectively developing a buffer zone in which farmers have a better understanding of biosecurity.

[87] The tool itself is available to all veterinarians, and so, through the regional eradication boards and veterinarians, we are working to improve farmers' understanding of biosecurity. We are also considering very carefully the biosecurity measures that need to be in place in our intensive action pilot area, because in that area, where we are devoting so much attention and resource, we need to ensure that people understand it. So, it is a question of education, but the tool provides us with a practical means by which we can develop people's understanding of biosecurity. You are right to say that it is important.

[88] Another thing that we are doing with the Royal Veterinary College, through the Gelli Aur site, is working with veterinary students, who come into Wales every week throughout the year, looking at risk factors associated with the introduction of TB by understanding the epidemiology of individual farm breakdowns. That will feed into the scoring tool to improve our understanding, and to have a better set of weapons to protect ourselves and to fight disease. It is very important.

[89] **Peter Black:** Your paper states that the established enforcement group has identified its priority areas for consideration. What are the priorities, and how will they be addressed?

[90] **Elin Jones:** The enforcement group is not about biosecurity; it is about cattle testing and other issues. That is primarily a group within Government to identify individual farms that may be problem farms for the purpose of enforcing legislation, and to work across Government and with Animal Health on identifying ways of bringing those farms into compliance.

[91] **Mr Glyn:** The main purpose of the enforcement group is to bring together the various organisations, including farm liaison officers, to find the most appropriate way of dealing with individual cases. It is a way of ensuring that work is done across organisations to deal with those cases in the most appropriate manner. In the last few months, the key area for the group has been overdue tests, and another area that it is currently looking at is ensuring that people keep in line with pre-movement testing requirements when moving animals to markets. In the Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion area, the group has been doing one-off checks in markets to check that animals were pre-movement tested. We are looking to review the results of that check.

[92] **Peter Black:** In your progress paper, you state that the revised enforcement protocol for TB testing has been implemented by Animal Health and local authorities. How are you monitoring the effectiveness of this protocol, and what steps are you taking to ensure that enforcement is consistent across all local authority areas?

[93] **Mr Glyn:** The enforcement group has agreed a protocol and an agreed method of dealing with overdue tests, to which all local authorities, Animal Health and the Assembly Government have signed up. The key target is to ensure that we do not have longer-term overdue cases over the three-month period. There is now a diagram showing the different steps that should be taken by local authorities or Animal Health at each stage, which we will closely monitor.

[94] **Peter Black:** Have you received feedback from local councils, or do you contact them on a regular basis?

[95] **Mr Glyn:** They give feedback to the enforcement group on a regular basis.

[96] **Brynle Williams:** I suppose that this is the thorniest subject, Minister, but when do you anticipate that the cull will take place in your pilot area?

[97] **Elin Jones:** There are several work strands to that. The most important and relevant strand in terms of timing is the legislation that allows us to undertake that piece of work. The consultation on the legislation finishes at the end of July, and I will consider my response to that consultation. So, we do not anticipate that that legislation will be in place until the beginning of the Assembly's autumn term. The legislation, as it is currently drafted, allows us to undertake the work.

10.30 a.m.

[98] However, other work streams are being developed on this that involve putting in place the structures to undertake the cull in north Pembrokeshire. So, I anticipate that, after consideration of the legislation, and when I have made the announcement on the legislation, I will be in a position to give a clearer understanding to all as to when the cull will take place. However, I think that it is important to remind Members that, with regard to badgers in north Pembrokeshire, there is a time of year when we are advised that it would not be appropriate to carry out a cull, due to welfare considerations related to the rearing of young badgers. That period is in the first part of the calendar year; I forget when the exact period is, but it is in the early months.

[99] **Alun Davies:** I wish to press you on that a little further, Minister. It appears that you are saying that the statutory framework will be put in place during the autumn, certainly during the autumn term here, and that, in parallel, you will be completing your practical arrangements, and that you have foreseen that you will encounter no difficulties in doing that—you have not reported any. So, we can conclude that these practical arrangements will also be in place towards the end of the year and that you will then be looking at an animal welfare issue at the beginning of next year, so we might assume that you will be in a position to implement this policy from around Easter 2010.

[100] **Elin Jones:** You have concluded and assumed a lot. [*Laughter.*] The considerations for me will be on the practical aspects of what is put in place, what we are currently putting in place with the legislation, and the role of that legislation, which will be in place some time in the autumn term. I will then need to take advice on what is practically possible before and after the closed period. We will need to wait to see where we are with this particular legislative process as well as with the practical implementation process in the early autumn. I anticipate being able to make clear at that time when the cull will happen.

[101] **Alun Davies:** Thank you. You did not challenge many of my assumptions in that answer, Minister. I think that it is only fair that we press you on this, because it is clearly an issue of some public concern. On where you are at the moment, I will conclude, again, from your answer that you will make a statement to the Assembly in the autumn, when the legislative process has concluded, on how you see the Government's view on the implementation of the policy allowed by that legislation. We are therefore looking at any period from Christmas onwards.

[102] **Elin Jones:** I do not want to prejudge my decision on the legislation at this point, because it is subject to public consultation and further advice to me subject to the consultation. I do not want to put any dates in anyone's calendar at this point other than to say that, when I make an announcement on the legislation, whatever that announcement may be, I will give a clear indication as to when the practical and legislative aspects of this piece of

work will coincide to allow a cull to happen in north Pembrokeshire.

[103] **Brynle Williams:** Minister, your paper states that you intend to introduce individual farm plans for keepers of susceptible animals in the pilot scheme area. What is the purpose of these plans, and what mechanism will be put in place to ensure that livestock farmers and other stakeholders comply with their obligations as part of this pilot scheme?

[104] **Alun Davies:** In answering that question, will you outline the assessment, monitoring and evaluation processes that you will put in place as part of the programme?

[105] **Elin Jones:** I will ask Christianne to outline those to you, but to reiterate what Christianne said in her early comments about comparing the work that we will undertake in north Pembrokeshire with that of the independent scientific group work in England. We have to remember that what we are putting in place in north Pembrokeshire is not an exact replica of that. We are looking to put in place further on-farm cattle controls in that area, which is currently subject to discussion between veterinary surgeons, farmers, Animal Health and us. Perhaps Christianne can outline some of that and also answer the question on the monitoring and the evaluation.

[106] **Dr Glossop:** We need to recognise that there will be several hundred farms within the area that we choose to treat in this way. All of the farms that have cattle will be involved and very interested in what is happening, but each farm has its own unique way of operating. It might be a farm with a closed herd that does not buy in cattle; it might be a farm that has to buy in cattle. The herds might be large, small, dairy or beef and so forth. Each farm will have its own unique challenges and needs. It is really important that every cattle holding in the area recognises and understands its own individual responsibilities, and its own potential risks to the possibility of introducing infection. If effort goes into dealing with infection in the area in relation to wildlife and cattle, for example, it would be a tragedy to allow infected cattle to be brought into that area while that treatment and process is taking place. The plan for each farm will be based on the biosecurity scoring tool that I have already described and will be considered in relation to a farm health plan, looking at the specific risk factors for that individual business to enable it to continue functioning, whatever that business might be, while minimising the risk of introducing infection. That is why each farm plan has to be done separately. That is why we are currently talking to the private veterinary surgeons for that area. We know how to work with private veterinary surgeons on this kind of work because of the work that we did in Pembrokeshire a few years ago. Therefore, each farm will have its own plan, which will be monitored by the private veterinary surgeon and by Animal Health.

[107] It is really difficult to go into more detail because every farm is different, but we need to be very specific with our advice and guidance while minimising the risk of introducing infection, which is the whole purpose of working with each individual farmer. We also need to make sure that every farmer understands what we are trying to achieve and what they can do to contribute to this in relation to the frequency of their testing and every other measure that they take. We also need to look at what movements are essential for that farmer into and out of the area. Perhaps the farmer has grass tacks elsewhere and we have to think about the risk of moving animals. Therefore, all of those factors will feed into the individual plans. We will then have area controls because all of those farms will be brigaded to work together to protect against the introduction of infection.

[108] On assessment, I assume that you mean the assessment of the progress on the disease picture in the area.

[109] **Alun Davies:** The effectiveness of the programme.

[110] **Elin Jones:** The entire programme.

[111] **Dr Glossop:** Yes. We are currently carrying out our Health Check Wales, which includes every herd in this area and so, by the end of this year, we will have a very accurate disease picture with no overdue tests. We will have an exact picture of the number of herds that are under restrictions, the TB breakdown, and the length of time that herds have been under restrictions and so on. We are in the process of developing our set of indicators to monitor progress in that area.

[112] The randomised badger culling trial studied one aspect of the disease picture in the different areas that were treated, and that was the number of confirmed new incidents of TB within the trial areas during the period of the trial and in the years that followed. It is important to measure that, and we will also be monitoring it. However, it is cold comfort for a farm that is currently under restrictions and undergoing a TB breakdown to think that the only thing that we are interested in is clean farms and whether they stay clean.

10.40 a.m.

[113] Alongside the monitoring of new breakdowns—and we will find new breakdowns, because we are continuing to test, and an epidemic is still ongoing—we will also monitor the duration of breakdowns, namely the length of time that herds in that area are under restrictions and undergoing testing, and the scale of the breakdowns. You will recall that, in recent months, we have had some high-profile, extreme and explosive TB breakdowns with several hundred reactors on-farm. Our objective will be to reduce the size of those breakdowns by finding infection more quickly and not allowing it to spread within the herd. The monitoring of progress in this area will look at all those aspects: the nature of the breakdowns, their scale, the introduction of infection, the number of new breakdowns and the extent of the disease within individual animals through the post-mortem examination that will be carried out on every reactor. We will have a whole set of indicators.

[114] We will also be interested in the incidence of infection in other non-bovine species, and, as we carry out our fieldwork in the area, working with cattle farmers, we will be interested in all the other land that is not occupied by cattle and whether other susceptible species are being kept there. We have talked about camelids, goats and so on. We will also monitor infection in those species.

[115] **Brynle Williams:** Are you continuing with the ‘found dead’ testing as part of this or is that finished?

[116] **Elin Jones:** The announcement that we had finished the ‘found dead’ survey of badgers was made in this committee by another administration two or three years ago.

[117] **Brynle Williams:** Yes, but is there room for that in this plan—to put it that way?

[118] **Dr Glossop:** We have a protocol in place at the moment whereby, if we find disease in a new area—a hot spot area—we are interested in finding out whether there is infection in our wildlife. So, that process is in place. In this area, we will have badgers that we have removed and we will be in a position to make the best use of those animals to evaluate the level of infection. It will not be a question of badgers being found dead, but we will have badgers that we have removed. We have to balance making the best use of resources and considering what we do with the information. We are in the process of considering how to make best use of the material that is available.

[119] **Alun Davies:** Mae’r sesiynau hyn wastad yn rhedeg yn hwyr. Yr wyf yn ddiolchgar am eich presenoldeb y bore yma **Alun Davies:** These sessions always run late. I am grateful to you for your attendance this morning and for the way that you have

a'r ffordd yr ydych wedi ateb yr holl gwestiynau. Diolch ichi, Weinidog, ac i'ch swyddogion. Deallaf ein bod yn cyfarfod unwaith eto yn y Sioe Frenhinol ymhen pythefnos pan fydd sesiwn holi fwy cyffredinol ar eich polisiau ar gyfer Cymru wledig. Byddaf yn ysgrifennu atoch yn rhestru meysydd y cwestiynau cyn y cyfarfod hwnnw, er mwyn rhoi cyfle ichi baratoi. Fel pwyllgor, yr ydym yn ddiolchgar ichi am gytuno i fynychu'r sesiwn honno yn y sioe.

answered all our questions. Thank you, Minister, and your officials. I understand that we will meet again in the Royal Welsh Show in two weeks for a more general question and answer session on your policies for rural Wales. I will write to you with a list of the areas of questioning for that meeting beforehand, so that you have an opportunity to prepare. As a committee, we are grateful to you for agreeing to attend that session in the show.

10.43 a.m.

### **Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion**

[120] **Alun Davies:** Cynigiaf fod

**Alun Davies:** I move that

*y pwyllgor yn penderfynu gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog Rhif 10.37(vi).*

*the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 10.37(vi).*

[121] Gwelaf fod aelodau'r pwyllgor yn gytûn.

I see that committee members are in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.  
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10.44 a.m.  
The public part of the meeting ended at 10.44 a.m.*