

# Britain grants first licence for badger cull

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This picture taken in 2007 shows Kyrgyz hunters training a dog to hunt a badger. Up to 3,000 badgers could be killed in England after a government agency on Friday issued the first licence for a pilot cull in a bid to prevent the spread of tuberculosis in cattle.

Up to 3,000 badgers could be killed in England after a government agency on Friday issued the first licence for a pilot cull in a bid to prevent the spread of tuberculosis in cattle.

Natural England issued the licence to allow farmers in Gloucestershire, western England, to kill badgers, which are otherwise a protected species, on around 300 farms.

Farmers say the measure is required to tackle TB in [cattle](#) because badgers spread the disease to livestock, costing livestock owners and the taxpayer millions of pounds a year.

The decision was greeted with dismay by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), which called on the government to introduce a vaccination programme instead.

"It needs to look at the science and change their policy to one of vaccination—let's cure and not kill."

Asked if he thought the first pilot culling licence was a positive first step towards a more widespread cull in England, new Environment Secretary Owen Paterson said: "I very much hope so."

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