

Restrict contact between badgers and cattle

- Introduce barriers to prevent cattle accessing badgers

For more information see Five Actions on the TB Hub website: <http://www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity/protect-your-herd-from-tb/>

Electric fencing (Cattle)



Fig.1 Standard electric stock fencing

How does this measure work?

The frequency of cattle coming into contact with potentially infectious materials (e.g. badger faeces and urine) or grazing in areas where badger activity is concentrated (e.g. near badger setts and latrines) can be reduced by using standard stock fencing. Identifying badger activity and recognising that such areas potentially carry a higher risk for TB transmission to cattle can allow farmers to take steps to reduce the risk at pasture.

Where badger setts, latrines and runs are found within cattle pasture a temporary standard electric stock fence can create a buffer to prevent cattle grazing directly over such areas. Although badgers regularly use the same setts and runs, latrines can suddenly appear or expand from hedgerows into pasture used by cattle. Therefore a simple solution is to place some posts and wire/tape to keep cattle away from fresh badger activity. The benefit of temporary fencing is that the posts can be moved if the badger latrine moves or removed if badger activity ceases. Although temporary fences require some management, permanent fences around badger activity encourages vegetation growth. This results in badger activity moving to the new edge, with which cattle may come into contact.

How has this measure been tested?

These methods have not been field tested, but are part of the advice given to farmers by APHA to reduce contact between cattle and badgers at pasture. It is recognised that vigilance and an understanding of badger activity is required by the farmer. Maintenance and upkeep of these measures is also understood to have an impact on farmer's time, but any precautionary measure that may reduce potential risks at pasture should be taken.

Product examples	Approximate Guide Price (£*)
Plastic electric fence posts (Multi-wire, 1050 mm tall), Polywire or Tape , earth spike, signage, clamps, (excl. fencer unit and 12v battery)	From £1.00 - 1.50 per metre
* Prices listed exclude VAT and cost of fitting (as of January 2017)	

Examples of biosecurity measures: Electric fencing (Cattle)

Case study A:

This farm has a badger sett extending into grazing pasture (Fig.2). A simple single strand electric stock fence was used to keep the cattle from entering the area to prevent them from grazing over this area of concentrated badger activity and from slipping down the holes. The electric fence could be moved if badger activity extended further into the pasture. To maintain vegetation around a badger sett a licence is not usually needed if it is unlikely to disturb the badgers or damage the sett, and provided vegetation is not uprooted or blocks access to the sett.



Fig. 2: Standard electric stock fence around a badger sett (holes, run and spoil heaps) on the edge of pasture.

Case study B:

Badgers use latrines for marking their territories and so they may be visited by a number of individuals from different social groups. Latrines can occur in the same location year after year, but they may also move and appear in new locations. Latrines usually consist of a single shallow pit or a group of pits spread over several metres or along field edges. Badger faeces can vary from firm formed to loose stools depending on diet. Latrines are usually on well-worn badger paths (runs) and are often concentrated at field edges, although they can also occur in woodland and open pasture. The ground and grass around latrines is often well trampled by badger traffic. Where latrines are found on cattle pasture, temporary electric fencing can be used to exclude cattle. It is advisable that cattle are kept a minimum distance of 3 metres away from latrines as badgers may also scent mark and urinate in the immediate vicinity.



a)



b)

Fig. 3: a) Badger faeces in pit, b) latrine in pasture (note the multiple piles of faeces around the pit).

Measure recommendations

Standard stock electric fencing to provide a buffer between cattle and areas of regular badger activity:

- Wire (single or double strand) at a height of 80 cm from the ground to keep cattle out.
- Plastic electric fence posts spaced to keep cattle a minimum of 4 m away from badger activity (note: badgers can scent mark and urinate away from the visible pits).
- Fencer unit and battery with sufficient power to electrify the entire fence line.
- May require maintenance, such as mowing/strimming or sheep grazing, to prevent vegetation growth and a new edge to the pasture occurring.
- **IMPORTANT:** The fence should be a temporary structure, easily moved if badger activity ceases or moves.