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Dear Viscount Brookeborough,

Thank you for your participation in the Oral Question tabled by Lord Colgrain on the progress made towards identifying a vaccine for eradicating bovine tuberculosis. I am writing as I did not have the chance to answer your question fully.

Regarding moving to permissible culling of badgers throughout the country, the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it an offence to kill, injure, or take a badger or to interfere with a sett. The Act allows the culling of badgers under licence for purposes such as preventing the spread of disease. Licensing in this way has helped to ensure badger culling is sustained and coordinated, whereas ad hoc culling could increase disease prevalence in remaining badgers and increase disease risks to cattle.

This letter will be circulated to those who participated in the debate with a copy placed in the House of Lords library.

LORD HARLECH