

Bovine TB Deliberately Spread by Government

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New Zealand First says it is incomprehensible that Government agencies are using taxpayers money, and farmers' Animal Health Levies, to introduce bovine tuberculosis (BTB) into an area previously determined to be free of the disease.

TB Free NZ is funding a Landcare research project close to Wellington where possums are deliberately inoculated with TB and then released to spread the disease in the wild, in what is described as a "transmission trial."

TB Free now plans to "cull" the affected animals by way of an otherwise completely unnecessary 1080 poison drop over a huge region of the Rimutaka Forest Park that borders farmland and includes waterways, hiking tracks, and hunting areas.

"They know the 1080 won't get all the possums, but 1080 will kill a lot of native birds as well as deer, and the artificially infected surviving possums will probably infect livestock with TB as

a result,” says Primary Industries and Outdoor Recreation Spokesperson Richard Prosser.

“Answers to our written questions provided by the Minister of Primary Industries, Hon Nathan Guy, prove that no pigs, possums or deer have been found with naturally occurring TB in this area - unless, as New Zealand First has discovered, you count the possums infected artificially.

“The minister claims that TB infected cattle have been found in the area – clearly they either caught TB from other cattle or they got it from deliberately infected possums.

“There are questions that need serious answers here. Which Ministers knew about this, and when did they know? Do farmers know that the agency that is supposed to be eradicating TB is instead deliberately spreading it, using farmers’ money? Who approved this ludicrous and grossly irresponsible experiment?

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1603/S00395/bovine-tb-deliberately-spread-by-government.htm>