



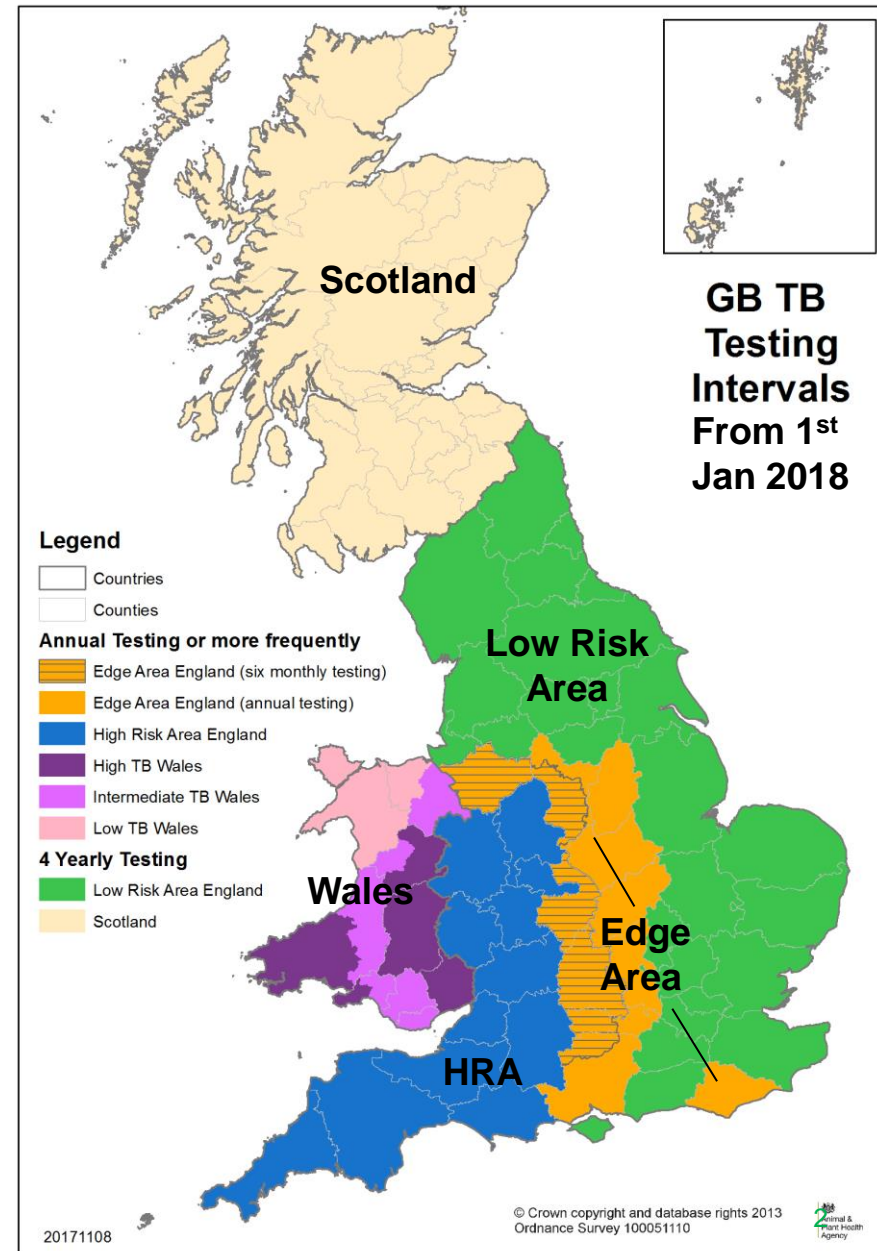
Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

# United Kingdom: report on the implementation of the bovine tuberculosis eradication programme in 2019

SCoPAFF meeting  
Brussels  
July 2020

# bTB surveillance and control zones in GB

- **Scotland:** OTF since Oct 2009
- **Low Risk Area of England (LRA):**
  - 19,900 cattle holdings
  - 4-yearly default herd testing interval, but ~10% of herds tested every year
  - Very low and stable incidence
- **Edge Area of England:**
  - 8,700 cattle holdings
  - Annual or 6-monthly herd testing
  - Intermediate (but rising) incidence
- **High Risk Area of England (HRA):**
  - 20,000 cattle holdings
  - Annual herd testing
  - High, stable incidence & prevalence



## Wales:

- 11,800 holdings (annual testing)
- Areas of high, intermediate and low incidence (declining slowly overall)

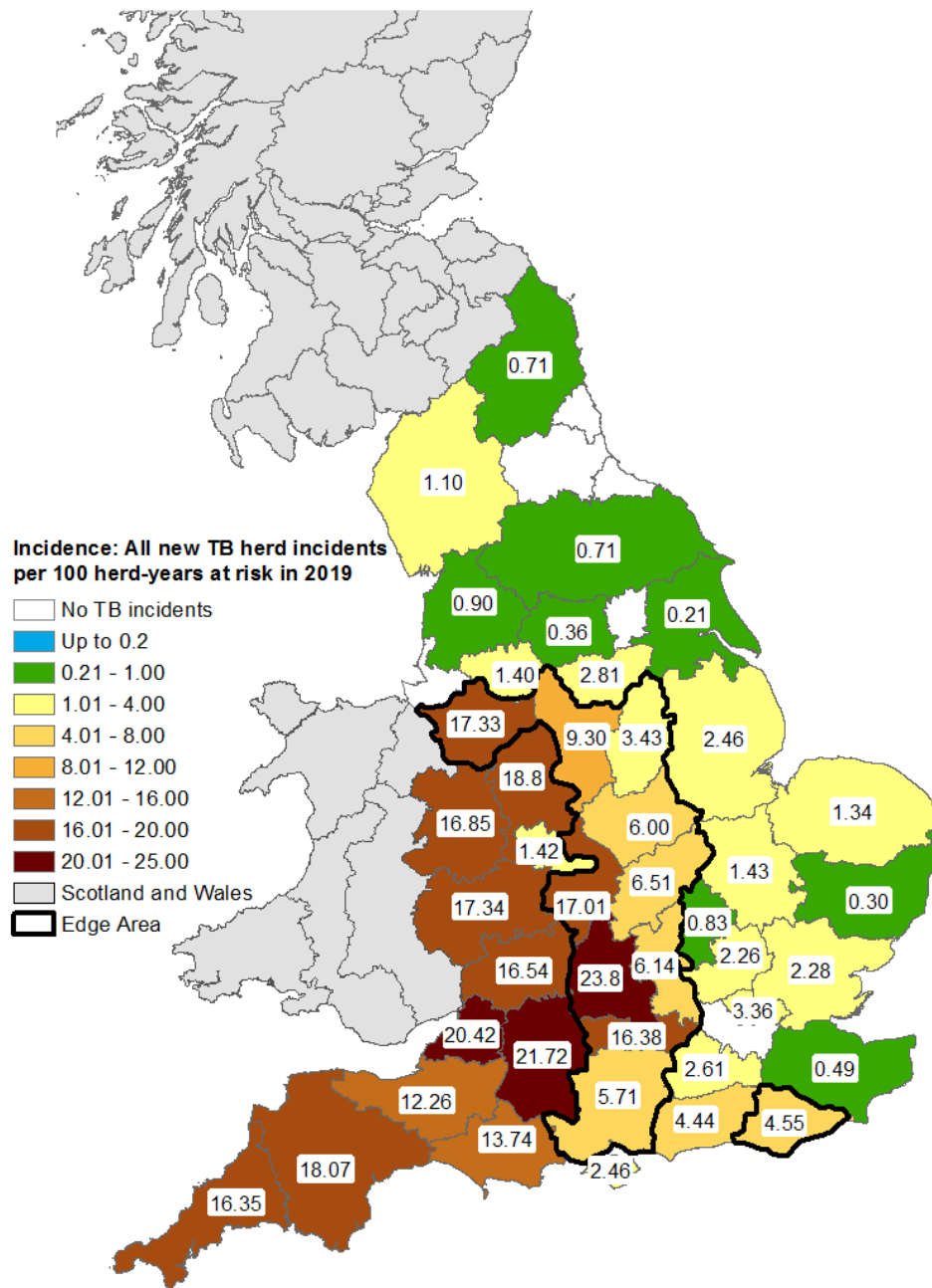
**A refreshed TB Eradication Programme for Wales launched, 1 October 2017. This included introduction of a regionalised approach and, based on incidence at the time, the creation of:**

- **Low TB Area** – less than 1.5% of herds have had a TB incident in a year.
- **Intermediate TB Areas** - less than 5% but more than 1.5% of herds have had a TB incident in a year.
- **High TB Areas** - more than 5% of herds have had a TB incident in a year.

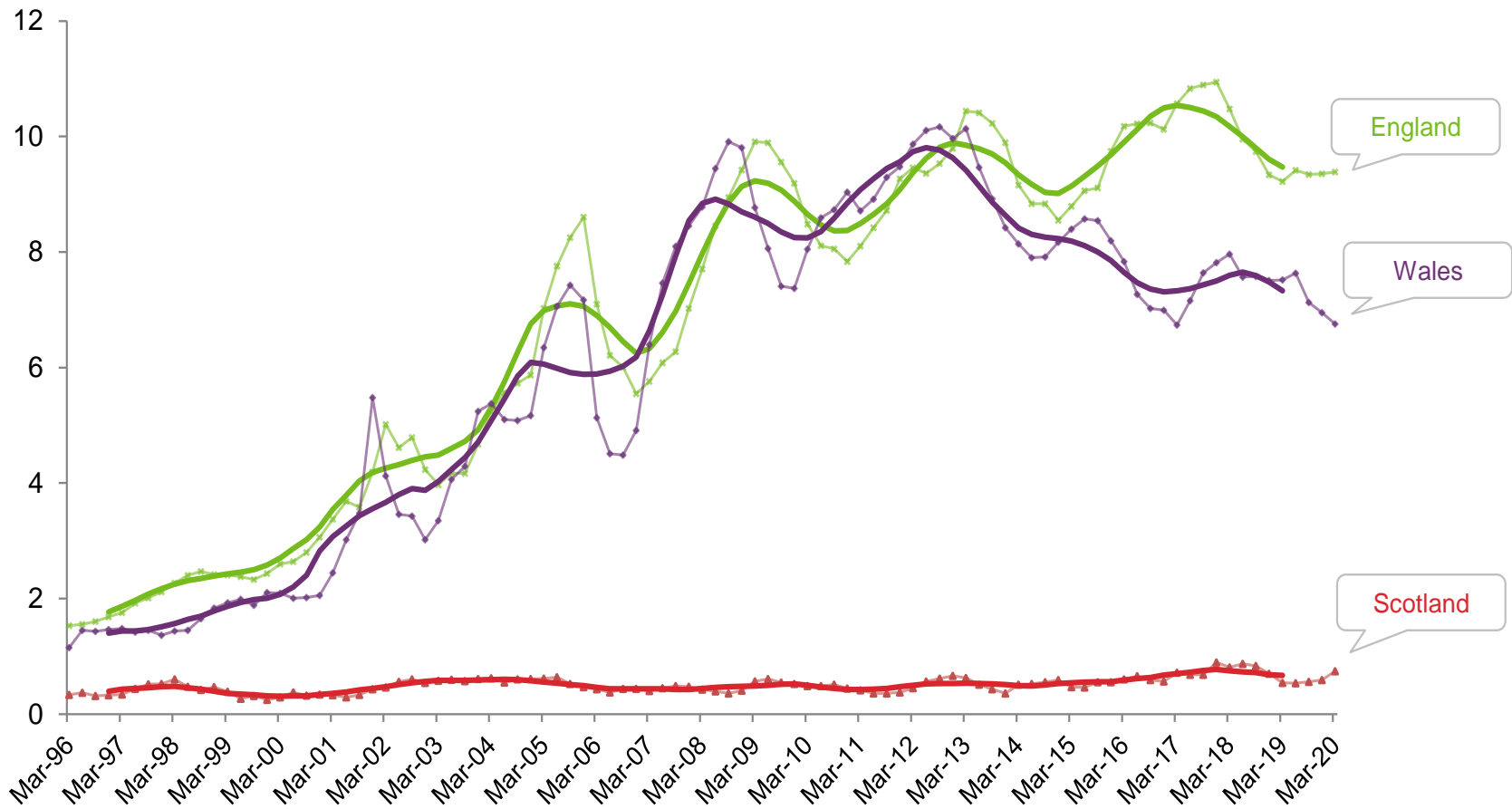


# England: herd incidence rate by county (2019)

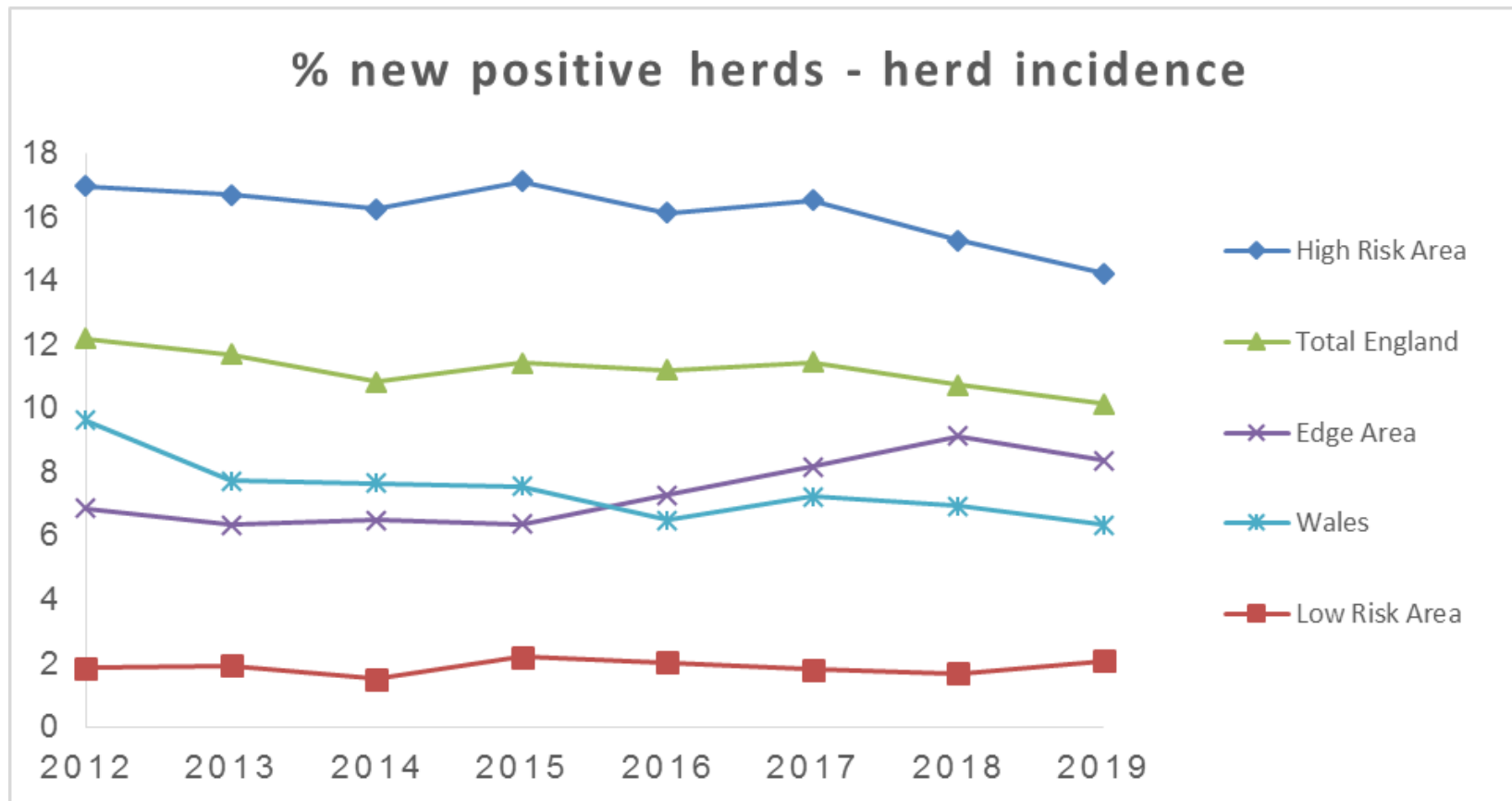
Herd incidence was highest in the West of England, where *Mycobacterium bovis* infection is endemic in the Eurasian badger (*Meles meles*) – this native wildlife species is a maintenance host of *M. bovis* and a major constrain to bTB eradication in cattle in those areas



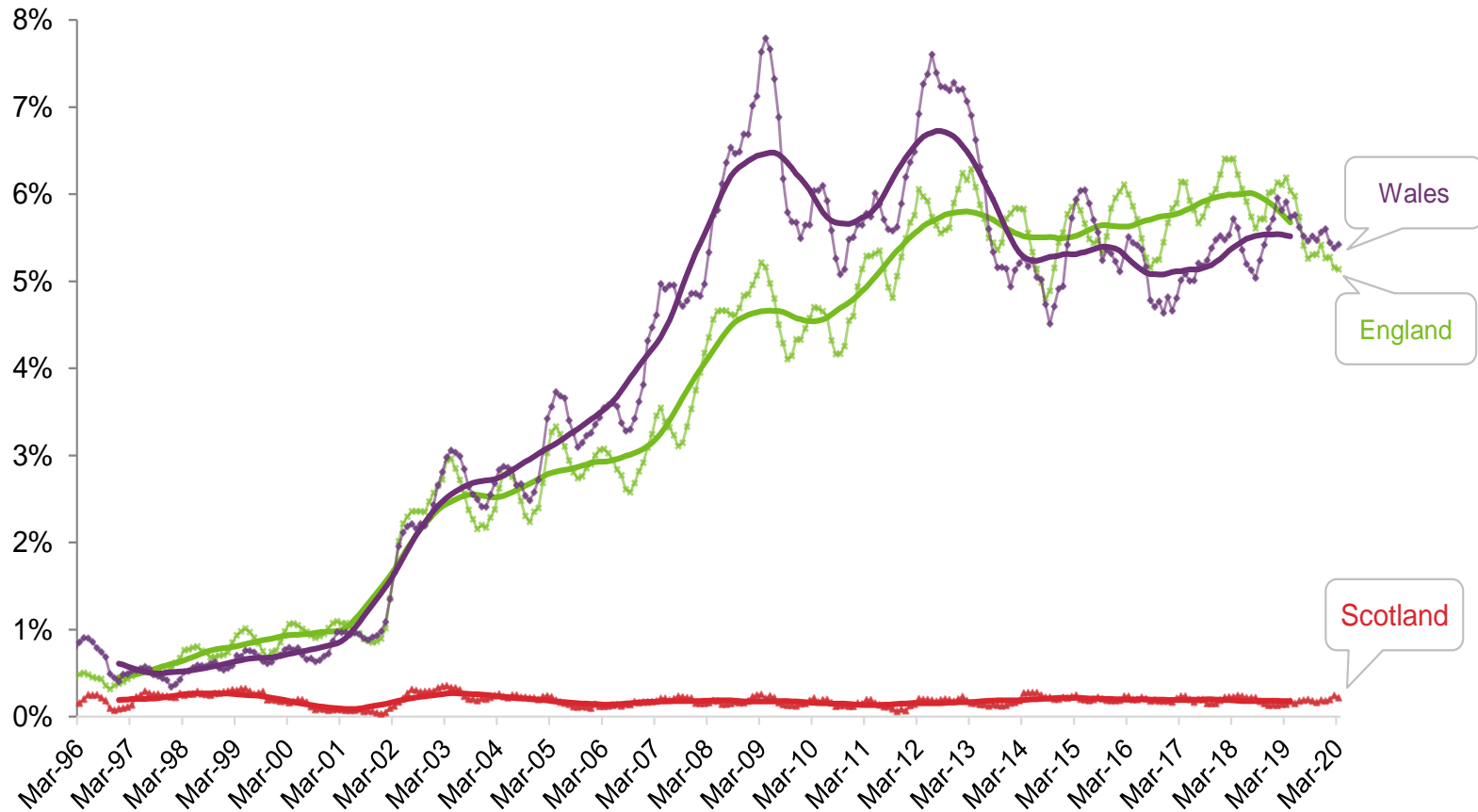
# Herd incidence rate by country of GB: (total new positive herds per 100 herd-years at risk)



# Annual herd incidence rate in England( by risk area) & Wales : percentage of new positive herds out of all cattle herds tested

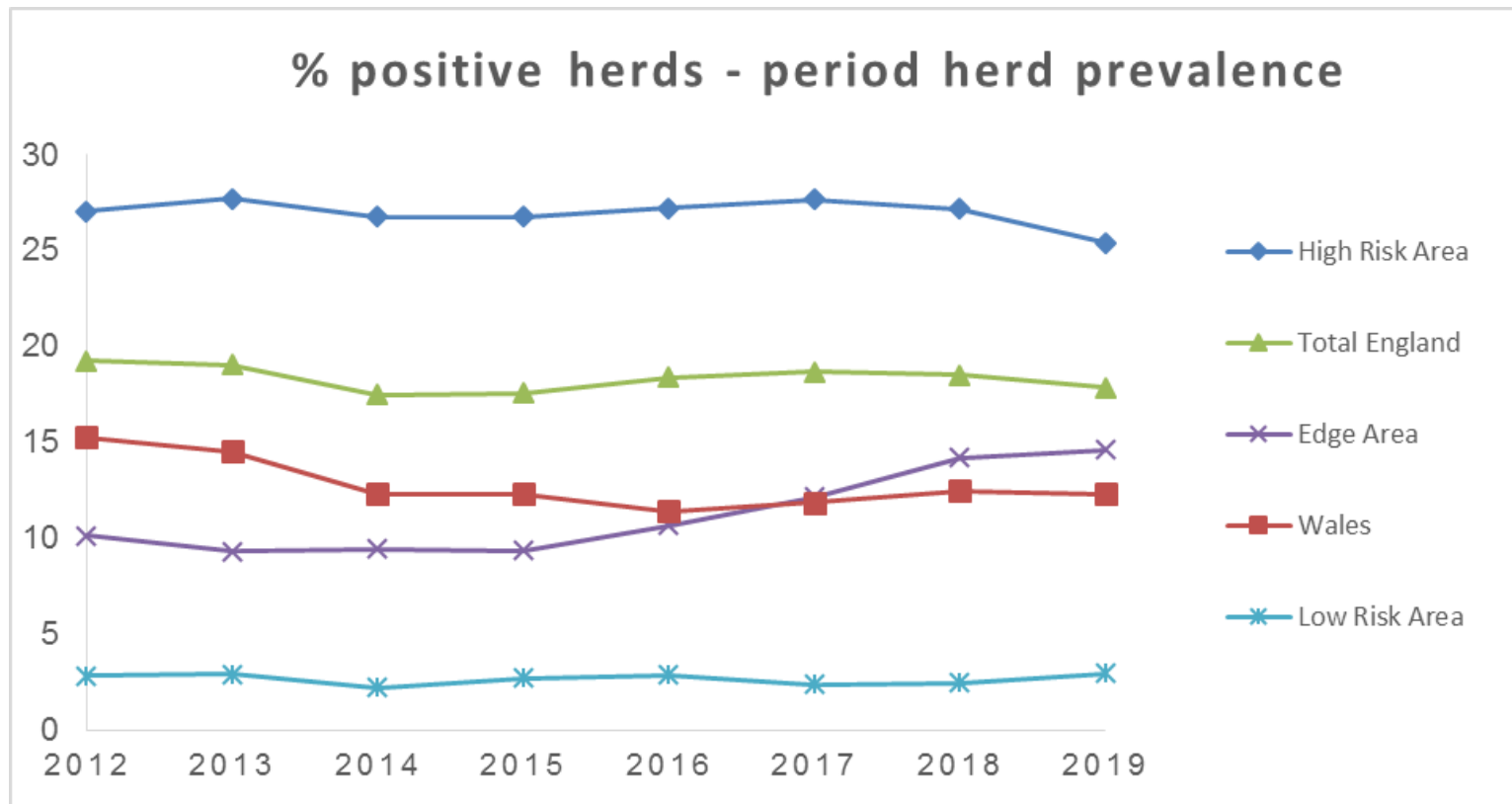


# Herd prevalence by country of GB: percentage of herds under movement restriction (OTF status suspended or withdrawn) at the end of the month



# Annual period herd prevalence in England( by risk area) and Wales :

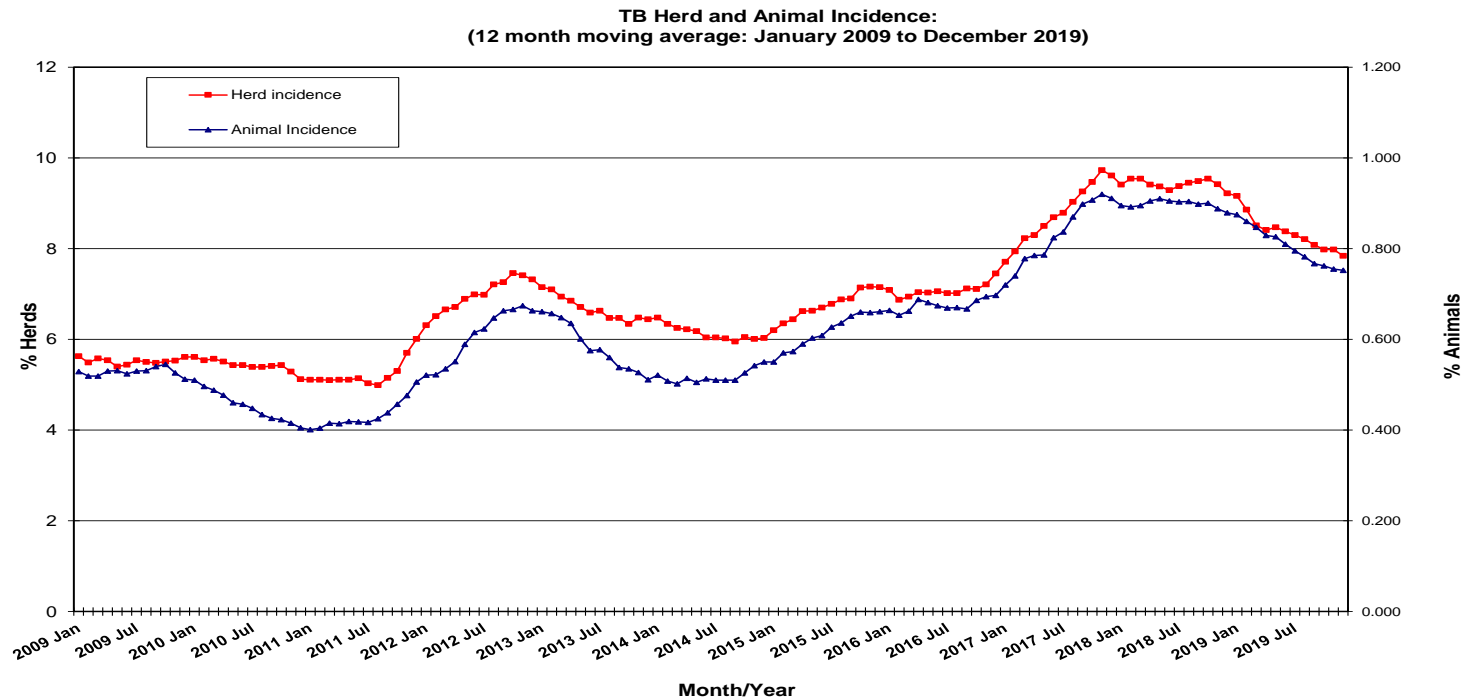
percentage of total positive herds out of all cattle herds tested during the year



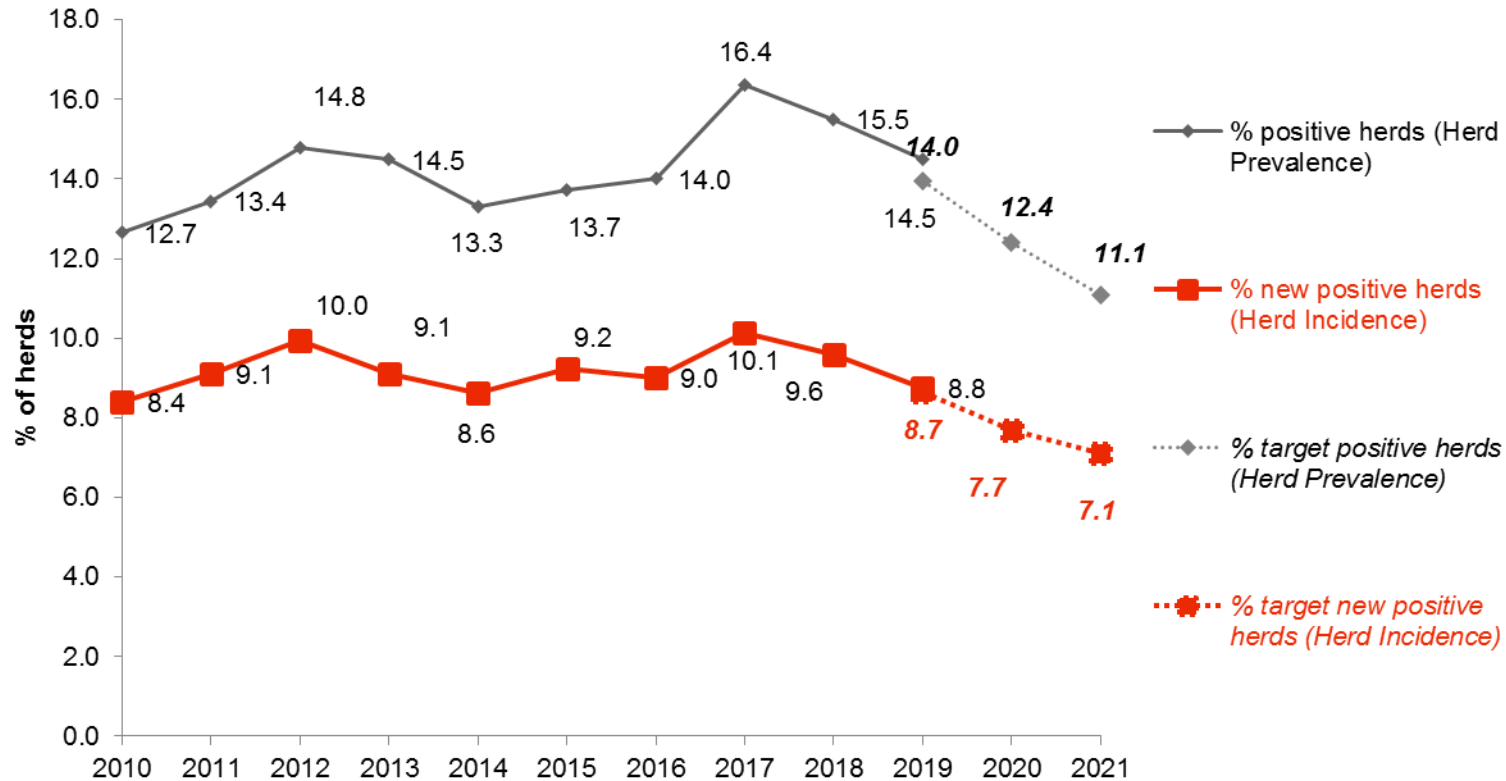


# Northern Ireland: herd incidence & prevalence

|                  | December 2019 | December 2018 |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Herd incidence   | 7.84%         | 9.22%         |
| Herd prevalence  | 9.65%         | 12.38%        |
| Animal incidence | 0.75%         | 0.88%         |



# Evolution of bTB eradication: Overall UK<sup>1</sup> herd prevalence & incidence and targets for 2019-2021



<sup>1</sup> Combined values for England, Wales & Northern Ireland

# England – Programme enhancements 2019

- Progressive expansion of badger culling operations: licensed in nine new areas in the HRA and one in the Edge Area, with operations now covering 40% the total land surface of the HRA
- Badger culling was also licensed for the first time in the LRA, to supplement additional TB control measures in cattle, in a defined section of East Cumbria where endemic *M. bovis* infection was identified in badgers in 2017
- Publication of the joint government-farming industry bTB biosecurity progress report in December 2018
- More frequent testing of herds in an enlarged Edge Area (Jan 2018)
- Recommencing badger vaccination projects in the Edge Area under the Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme in summer 2018
- Compensation payments halved for cattle moved (under licence) into TB positive herds that are later removed as test reactors or direct contacts before that herd regains OTF status.
- Independent review of the Government's bTB Strategy reported in September 2018.

# Wales- Programme enhancements 2019

- The **Badger Vaccination Grant** was re-opened, enabling private vaccination of badgers at a 50% match funding.
- The **Inconclusive Reactor (IR)** policy was reviewed in 2019 and the revised policy was implemented in early 2020. All cattle disclosed as IRs at standard interpretation in persistent herd breakdowns will continue to be removed as reactors. However, cattle disclosed as IRs at severe interpretation will be subject to both a gamma interferon blood test and an antibody test (IDEXX).
- In 2019 the APHA **Cymorth TB** management process was simplified so that breakdown and ITBAN *Keep it Out* farms will be allocated a visit unless they actively opt out. It is hoped that the rise in uptake, observed prior to COVID-19, will continue going forward.
- **Badger trap and test operations** are continuing on persistent TB breakdown farms.
- A **pilot scheme** was run by APHA trialling the attendance of OV's at selected **DRF** visits to enhance the working relationship and understanding of roles between Government and Private Vets. The pilot is now complete and a report containing recommendations has been made.

# N. Ireland – Programme enhancements 2019

- DAERA continues to develop policy advice to a future Minister following consultation on the Department's response to the TB Strategic Partnership Group's (TBSPG) recommendations
- Approach is focused on six thematic areas- Management, Oversight and Partnership; Tools and Processes; Herd Health Management; Finance and Funding; Research; and Wildlife.
- TB Eradication Partnership (TBEP) established to provide independent advice on the development and implementation of the TB Strategy. This was a TBSPG recommendation.
- Steady decline in herd incidence and animal incidence rate from high point in November 2017. Decline has occurred since increased use of 'severe interpretation' of the skin test was introduced in early 2018.
- 'Test and Vaccinate or Remove' wildlife intervention project is now complete with results beginning to emerge.

# Conclusions

- Bovine TB remains one of the most serious and costly animal health problem for the UK cattle industry & taxpayer
- Wide regional variations in bTB frequency, distribution and epidemiology (largely determined by infection in badgers)
- Improvement of key bTB epidemiological indicators in 2019 relative to 2018.
- Very low, stable incidence & prevalence in England's LRA.
- EU financial contribution provides valuable assistance. For 2020, this is limited to the programmes for Wales and Northern Ireland.