

Animal Health Awareness Week

23 -28 November 2020



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

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**Everyone has their part to play in
maintaining the health of our livestock**

Let's all play our part



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Animal Health Awareness Week

Based on the success of the first Animal Health Awareness event in 2019, this Department is holding a week long event, Animal Health Awareness Week, in 2020. Due to COVID-19, we are focusing on webinars rather than face-to-face talks to communicate our messages this year, giving us the opportunity to reach a larger audience.

Ireland is often described as an island on the edge of Europe. This location helps us to remain free from many of the animal diseases which affect other countries, which is very important to our entire agriculture sector.



Why is animal health so important for Ireland?

We export the majority of our agri-food products, and livestock farming is a key provider of these exports. Good animal health helps us to optimise the social, economic and environmental benefits of agriculture. Maintaining healthy animals helps farming and the agri-food industry to prosper in a variety of ways:

Healthy animals are happier animals. The high health and welfare status of our animals is a major selling point for Irish food internationally.

Healthy animals are more productive animals. Healthy animals produce more milk, meat, eggs, and have less sickness and lower mortality; meaning safer food, less greenhouse gas and improving the sustainability of farming.

The National Animal Health Strategy 2017 - 2022 provides a pathway to the outcomes that we can all achieve together, through increased animal health awareness

Farmer expertise and care in the husbandry of animals is a key element in ensuring good animal health. This ensures positive outcomes on farm and across the agri-food sector.



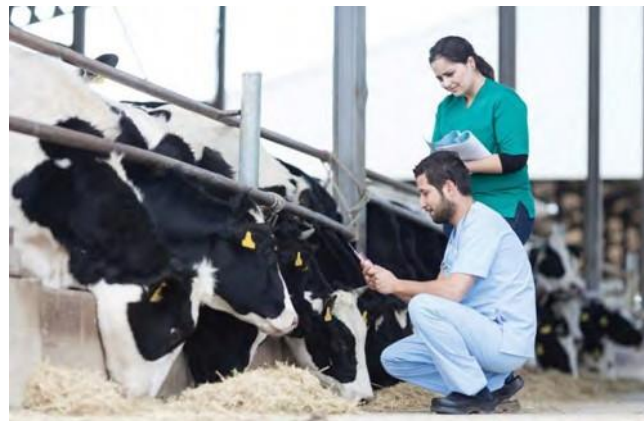
The National Animal Health Strategy also sets out the principles that we can apply to achieve the best outcomes

- Working in partnership
- Listening to each other, to take on board all views
- Clarity on all of our roles and responsibilities
- Acknowledging that society demands and expects animal owners to maintain the health of their animals
- Reflecting on costs and benefits

Globalisation brings New Opportunities and New Risks



Ireland exports agri-food products all over the world. Globalisation and travel also mean that we import products and welcome people from places once considered exotic. This means we must stay vigilant for diseases that are not native to our shores.



Ireland is free of many devastating livestock diseases.

We have freedom from Bluetongue, African Swine Fever, Newcastle Disease and other ailments that have devastated animal populations elsewhere. This helps provide assurance for consumers of Irish products, both at home and abroad.

The fewer diseases and lower the levels of disease present in a country, the more likely it is to retain existing markets and to access new ones.

The connections between animal health and public health:

The One Health framework is founded on the interconnections between human health, animal health and the environment.

A disease of animals which can also affect humans is known as a **“zoonosis”**.

Endemic zoonoses, present in many places and affecting many people and animals, are believed to be responsible for the majority of human cases of illness and deaths worldwide, as well as the greatest reduction in livestock production.

Therefore, to safeguard human health, we must pay great attention to animal health.



Lessons from the COVID 19 pandemic

COVID-19 is a dramatic illustration of how animal health and public health are interlinked. The disease is believed to have spread to humans from a reservoir in an animal population, possibly bats.

COVID-19 has also shown us how effective separation of different groups can be in controlling and suppressing a disease. The same principles apply to animal health.

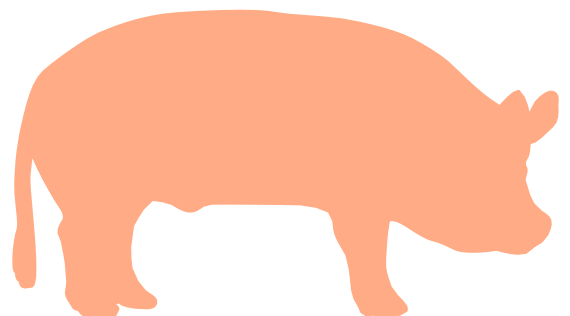
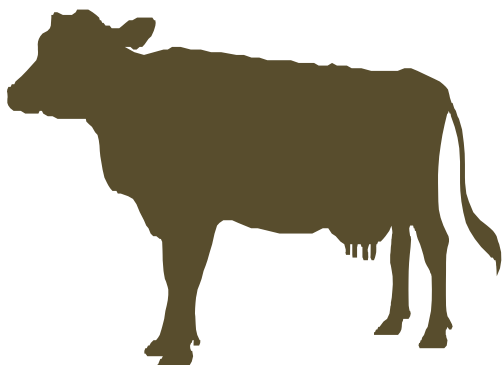
The Department's National Farmed Animal Biosecurity Strategy, which will be launched during AHAW 2020, sets out a framework through which we can prevent and suppress disease in our animals by working together.

Perhaps the most important lesson from the COVID-19 pandemic is how a disease can exert social and economic effects far in excess of its direct effects on health and wellbeing.

Diseases of animals have the potential to cause social and economic upheaval on a similar scale, therefore we must remain vigilant in the roles we all play in preventing and controlling disease.

How can you help to protect livestock from the threat posed by “exotic” diseases?

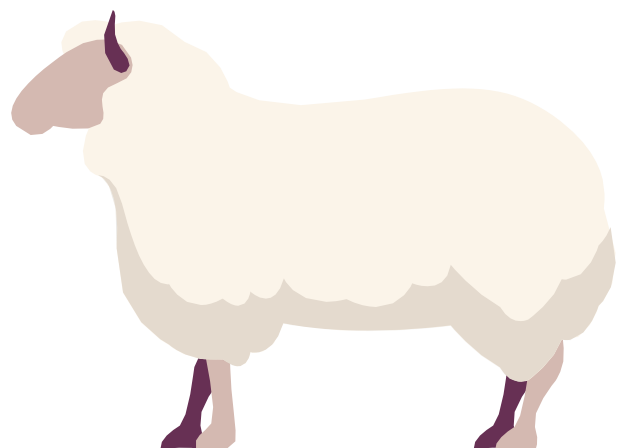
- **Avoid purchasing livestock from countries with higher disease risks**
- **Avoid feeding kitchen or catering waste** to farmed animals
- **Familiarise yourself with the signs of exotic and notifiable diseases** and report such diseases promptly if suspected
- Ask your vet to refer carcasses and samples to the **Department’s regional veterinary laboratories**, especially in cases of disease or mortality with no clear diagnosis or cause
- **Practice good biosecurity-** consider how diseases might come into your farm and keep them out



Biosecurity: How can you protect livestock from the more common or “endemic” diseases?

Be aware of your responsibility to protect the health of your own animals and those of your neighbour, in line with the principles of the National Farmed Animal Biosecurity Strategy, to be launched during AHAW 2020.

- Maintain a closed herd: avoid buying in livestock where possible.
- Avoid sharing equipment and vehicles between farms. If shared, clean and disinfect equipment between use.
- Use vaccinations appropriately according to the advice of a Vet
- Use anthelmintics and antimicrobials sparingly and according to the advice of a Vet.
- Use your Vet’s advice to put in place an effective herd health programme for your herd.



Animal Health Awareness Week- Programme of Events

“The Frontline at the Farm Gate”

Launch:

On Monday, November 23 2020, 6.45 pm, by Minister Charlie McConalogue T.D.

Programme of Webinars:

Date and time	Description
<p>Monday, November 23, 6.45pm - 8.30pm</p> <p>“Fighting Pandemics - the Animal Health Frontiers”</p>	<p>Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D., will launch Animal Health Awareness Week at 6.45pm.</p> <p>From 7 pm, an overview of the connection between animal health and pandemics, including an international perspective by an expert in this interesting field.</p>
<p>Tuesday, November 24, 6.45pm - 8.30pm</p> <p>“What Lies Beneath - Iceberg Diseases in Sheep”</p>	<p>Minister Hackett will launch the webinar at 6.45pm</p> <p>From 7pm, speakers from the Moredun Institute in Scotland, Teagasc and from the Department describe latest trends in important ovine diseases.</p>
<p>Wednesday, November 25, 6.45pm - 8.30pm</p> <p>“The Greatest Asset? Safeguarding Pig And Poultry Health”</p>	<p>Secretary Brendan Gleeson will launch the webinar at 6.45pm</p> <p>A variety of views on protection of pig and poultry health, from the point of view of different stakeholders. Featuring the official launch of the National Farmed Animal Biosecurity Strategy by Minister for Agriculture, Charlie McConalogue T.D.</p>
<p>Thursday, November 26, 6.45pm - 8.30pm</p> <p>“Problems and Opportunities - Cattle Health from different perspectives”</p>	<p>Minister Heydon will launch the webinar at 6.45pm</p> <p>From 7pm, speakers give their views on cattle health, based on their experiences of tackling disease problems. Features launch of a new Calf Welfare Booklet produced by the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council.</p>



Teagasc podcasts:

Department speakers will appear as guests on Teagasc podcasts to be released during AHAW, according to the following schedule:

1. Monday 23rd- **Dairy Edge- “Animal Health Awareness Week 2020- an overview.”** Michael Horan, Veterinary Inspector.
2. Tuesday 24th- **Ovicast- “Sheep health- views from a Regional Vet. Lab. post mortem room”.** Maresa Sheehan, Senior Veterinary Research Officer, Kilkenny.
3. Wednesday 25th- **Beef Edge- “Animal Health in Ireland- what the RVLs deliver”.** Mícheál Casey, Head of Department Regional Veterinary Laboratories.
4. Friday 27th- **Pig Edge “Post-mortems and preparedness- pig health through the laboratory lens.”** Margaret Wilson, Senior Veterinary Research Officer, Backweston.

Radio interviews:

Department vets will be appearing as guests on various radio shows, including local radio farming programmes, during Animal Health Awareness Week.

Lectures in third level courses:

Several third level education institutions have agreed to host lectures on animal health awareness for their students during Animal Health Awareness Week. Most lectures will be delivered remotely. Participating institutions include Teagasc agricultural colleges, Athlone IT, Dundalk IT, IT Carlow, IT Waterford, Letterkenny IT, University College Dublin and St. John’s College, Cork.

Leaflets and posters:

These will be delivered to locations frequented by farmers, including slaughter plants, marts and offices of agricultural advisors, for display during Animal Health Awareness Week.

Social media campaign:

Watch out for our tweets, Facebook posts and LinkedIn posts throughout the week! We encourage you to like and share to spread the word about this important initiative.



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AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



Waterford Institute of Technology
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA PHORT LAIRGE



For more information and webinar registration, visit
gov.ie/en/publication/82fdd-animal-health-awareness-week-webinar-registration

Animal Health Awareness Week, November 23rd - 28th, is an initiative of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. It is supported by a range of stakeholders from across the agrifood industry and third level institutions.