

# Epidemiological studies of poor animal performance on a farm in Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny

A contribution to the work of a national inter-agency group  
by the Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis,  
UCD Veterinary Sciences Centre, University College Dublin

*A report prepared for the Minister of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food, December 2009*



Department of  
**Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food**  
An Roinn  
**Talmhaíochta,  
Iascaigh agus Bia**

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material contained in this report. The views or opinions expressed in this report are solely those of the authors.

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## **Members of the project team**

The epidemiological studies were conducted by a team of people, as follows:

- Michael Sheridan (Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer, DAFF), project management
- Simon More (Professor, Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis, UCD School of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine), scientific oversight and epidemiological input
- Elizabeth Lane (Veterinary Inspector, DAFF Veterinary Inspectorate and UCD Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis), field and laboratory research
- Mary Canty (Assistant Agricultural Inspector, DAFF Agricultural Inspectorate and UCD Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis), field and laboratory research
- Guy McGrath (Geographer, UCD Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis), geographical input
- Tracy Clegg (Statistician, UCD Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis), statistical input
- Daniel Collins (Research assistant, UCD Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis), geographical input

Veterinary pathologists based at the Regional Veterinary Laboratory, Backweston campus conducted post mortem examinations.

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## **Background**

Production problems and stunting of cattle have been on-going intermittent problems on a farm in Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny for many years. A large number of studies and investigations have been reported by a number of state agencies and other parties since 2004.

## **Context**

To facilitate a coordinated and timely response to the above-mentioned problem an inter-agency group was established in early 2004, in accordance with the *Protocol for the investigative approach to serious animal/human health problems* (EPA, 1997). The group includes representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Teagasc and the South Regional Health Board (HSE South (SE)). A large number of studies have been conducted on behalf of this group, as reviewed in the *Overview*.

Veterinarians from University College Dublin (UCD), including the DAFF-supported Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology (CVERA), first became involved in this investigation in early 2004, at the request of staff from the Regional Veterinary Laboratory in Kilkenny. This involvement was formalised in early 2006, when CVERA was asked by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to undertake epidemiological studies relevant to the problem on the index farm. The current report details a series of epidemiological studies carried out and an overview of these and all other studies carried out to date.

## **References**

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