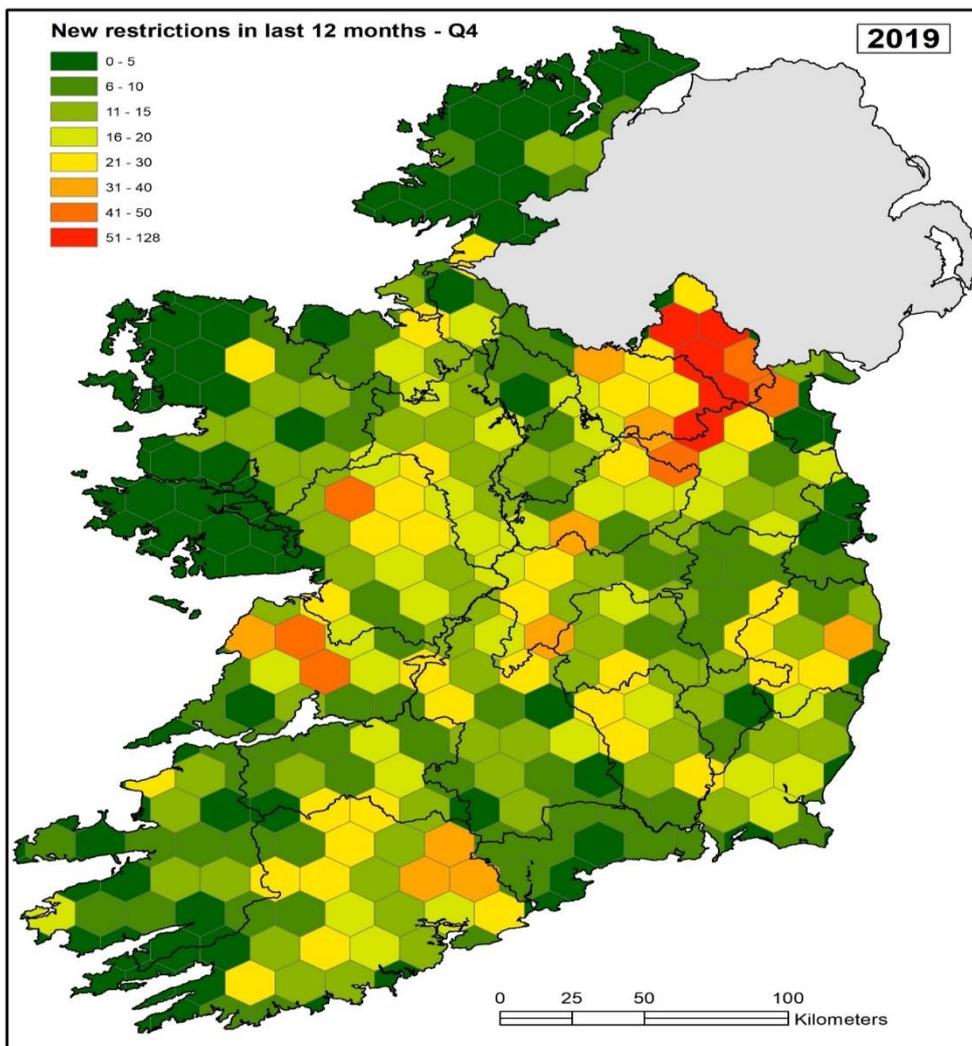




National Bovine TB Statistics 2019

As of 31 December 2019, national herd incidence for bTB stood at 3.72%, marginally up on 2018 (3.51%) and 2017 (3.47%). This means that since the beginning of 2019, 3.72% (4,060 herds) of all herds tested for bTB have experienced a new breakdown, i.e., they have had at least 1 animal that tested positive for bTB. Herd incidence for 2019 was the highest recorded since 2013 and marks the third successive year of increasing bTB levels.

As the following map shows, bTB levels in many areas overall are low but there are areas with higher levels of bTB in the north-east of Ireland (Monaghan, Cavan, Louth and North Meath) as well as parts of Clare, Cork, Wicklow and some other districts.



The number of reactors identified through a combination of skin testing and gamma interferon testing (GIF) in 2019 was 17,058, a decrease of 433 from 2018 (c.2.48%). GIF testing is able to identify bTB infection at an earlier stage than the skin (SICTT) test which is used for the annual round test. Therefore, when used appropriately, GIF testing can reduce the chances of leaving residual infection in a herd after de-restriction. We expect by removing more infected cattle earlier the risk of re-infection will fall.

Over the last 10 years herd incidence has fallen from just under 5.09% in 2009 to 3.72%, and reactor numbers have fallen from over 23,805 to 17,058. This level of progress would not be possible without excellent cooperation between farmers, Private Veterinary Practitioners and Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine officials. However, continuing efforts are now needed from all stakeholders to reverse the increase in national bTB incidence over the past three years and to reduce levels in 2020.

Regional

1. The herd incidence in Monaghan of 7.02% and Cork North of 6.12% (which is significantly higher than the national herd incidence of 3.72%) are particularly relevant as they have higher cattle densities than other counties and this therefore indicates greater amounts of bTB.
2. Cork North had the highest number of reactors at 1,993. Monaghan had the second highest at 1,336 followed by Clare with 1,190 reactors.
3. A targeted, High Impact bTB Control Plan has been in place in Monaghan and parts of Cavan and Clare during 2019 in collaboration with stakeholders. Its focus is to identify and eradicate disease in those areas as quickly as possible.
4. While Wicklow West had the highest herd incidence at 12.33% (380 reactors), this region has less than 0.5% of the national herd.
5. Limerick and Longford had the lowest herd incidence at 2.06% and 2.21% respectively.

TB 2030 Stakeholder Forum

1. The Forum's Chairman, Mr Michael Cronin presented a report to the former Minister in July 2019 containing a selection of proposals which could have a significant impact on the reduction of bTB in the years ahead.
2. It is intended that a strategy will be launched mapping a 10-year plan for bTB taking account of the recommendations of the Forum report.
3. The Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service completed a spending review on the bTB Programme which issued on Budget Day 2019, and this will be used to inform future policy consideration.

What is driving the current trends in bTB levels?

While Ireland has far lower levels of bTB than in previous decades, this trend has reversed over the past three years. The reasons why this is happening are multifactorial and often relate to local factors. It is likely that the expansion of the dairy herd since 2015 has played a role in this, since dairy herds, larger herds, and herds which introduce more cattle are all more at risk of bTB breakdowns. 52% of all bTB reactors in 2019 were in dairy herds, while there were approximately 2.8 million farm-to-farm cattle movements last year.

We know the risks from many years of scientific research. Risks must be addressed by national policy changes and by actions at farm level. As we enter into the decade towards 2030 this is a pivotal year for Ireland's bTB Eradication programme and it is critical that, through working in partnership and joint ownership, all stakeholders take the necessary actions to reduce disease transmission, protect herds from new infections, and clear bTB from restricted herds.

What can herd keepers do to reduce their risk of bTB?

These recommendations are part of the Department's efforts to help farmers tackle bTB.

1. Reduce the risk from badgers:
 - i) If badger setts or latrines are present on grazing land, fence them off with electric fencing to keep the grazing cattle away. This is to avoid cattle coming into contact with contaminated soil.
 - ii) Do not feed cattle concentrates spread on the ground, and try to avoid spilling feed on the ground, as badgers and deer may consume it and contaminate any leftovers which cattle may subsequently eat. Do not store feed, e.g. beet in an area accessible to wildlife
 - iii) Feed cattle in raised troughs.
 - iv) Wildlife-proof farm buildings by covering the lower part of access gates to sheds so wildlife can't get through.
 - v) Advise DAFM of any badger setts on your farm

2. Reduce the risk of contiguous spread;
 - i) Ensure boundary fences are well maintained, particularly if neighbouring land has a herd which has had bTB in the recent past.
 - ii) Avoid mixing groups of cattle which are normally managed on separate land fragments.
3. Reduce the risk of residual infection;
 - i) Consider culling any cattle which ever tested inconclusive, even if they subsequently re-tested negative.
 - ii) Consider culling any cattle which were in the herd during any previous bTB breakdown, particularly older cows.
4. Reduce the risk of introducing cattle which are infected;
 - i) If purchasing cattle, reduce the risk by sourcing them from a herd which has not had a bTB breakdown in recent years.
 - ii) If purchasing cattle at a mart, cattle with a more recent bTB test date are likely to be at less risk than similar cattle which were last bTB tested many months ago.
5. General Advice;
 - i) Ensure good quality bTB testing facilities are available and the vet receives any assistance needed.
 - ii) Farmers engaged in contract rearing should consider their biosecurity measures and how they would manage a bTB breakdown affecting the contract arrangements. Avoid feeding unpasteurised milk to calves
 - iii) Effective cleaning and disinfection of any areas where reactors were kept is essential and will reduce the risk of environmental contamination infecting other cattle.
 - iv) If sharing machinery, trailers, etc. with other farms, minimise the risk of bTB spread through environmental contamination by cleaning and disinfection.
 - v) When breeding, select bulls which are genetically more resistant to bTB and avoid those more genetically susceptible. ICBF provides bTB scores for bulls on their website, using a traffic light system.
 - vi) For practical advice and information on bovine TB, take a look at our advice videos, which can be found on DAFM's YouTube channel, or at www.agriculture.gov.ie/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrol/bovinetb/tb_eafletsandvideos/ or just google DAFM TB videos.

Bovine TB Statistics County Breakdown at Year End 2019

RVO	Number of Herds in County	Number of Herds Tested	Herds Restricted in 2019	Herd Incidence	Herds Restricted at end 2019	Number of Animals in RVO	Number of Tests on Animals	Number of Reactors	Reactor per 1000 Tests A.P.T.
CARLOW	1,292	1,270	37	2.91%	22	97,336	123,760	77	0.61
CAVAN	4,810	4,744	216	4.55%	108	218,207	332,460	941	2.36
CLARE	5,910	5,845	273	4.67%	134	254,295	375,832	1,190	2.66
CORK North	5,702	5,588	342	6.12%	208	523,265	798,849	1,993	1.92
CORK South	5,926	5,798	181	3.12%	96	445,268	580,538	898	1.17
DONEGAL	5,249	5,043	117	2.32%	46	171,254	210,692	219	0.98
DUBLIN	346	337	18	5.34%	18	20,440	27,711	137	4.8
GALWAY	10,824	10,698	299	2.79%	167	393,971	524,570	1,181	1.89
KERRY	6,581	6,494	184	2.83%	90	306,711	435,906	832	1.59
KILDARE	1,742	1,697	55	3.24%	66	120,980	146,165	84	0.54
KILKENNY	3,056	3,027	131	4.33%	79	326,201	419,001	507	1.04
LAOIS	2,710	2,681	114	4.25%	79	235,720	305,448	446	1.29
LEITRIM	2,863	2,839	73	2.57%	39	66,514	89,280	258	2.61
LIMERICK	5,204	5,106	105	2.06%	46	372,139	492,196	357	0.6
LONGFORD	2,337	2,309	51	2.21%	33	105,787	128,903	116	0.74
LOUTH	1,199	1,159	64	5.52%	33	86,083	107,324	194	1.36
MAYO	8,763	8,656	141	1.63%	73	241,656	320,106	379	0.98
MEATH	3,683	3,579	199	5.56%	135	267,273	386,790	555	1.3
MONAGHAN	4,235	4,162	292	7.02%	147	197,909	406,183	1,336	2.84
OFFALY	3,077	3,032	154	5.08%	100	219,789	294,330	598	1.67
ROSCOMMON	5,416	5,352	163	3.05%	68	182,848	249,728	464	1.71
SLIGO	3,371	3,335	97	2.91%	37	99,835	136,966	232	1.53
TIPP NORTH	3,439	3,371	142	4.21%	82	295,751	414,657	851	1.9
TIPP SOUTH	3,416	3,349	95	2.84%	74	297,366	386,916	377	0.76
WATERFORD	2,169	2,135	51	2.39%	29	233,639	281,986	148	0.48
WESTMEATH	3,063	3,013	157	5.21%	100	192,248	273,827	626	2.12
WEXFORD	3,050	3,011	147	4.88%	65	276,353	388,119	743	1.49
WICKLOW E	1,058	1,042	100	9.60%	63	73,347	127,565	939	6.04
WICKLOW W	513	503	62	12.33%	36	41,224	61,874	380	4.82
TOTAL	111,004	109,175	4,060	3.72%	2,273	6,363,409	8,827,682	17,058	1.62
31/12/2018	112,105	110,454	3,874	3.51%	2,176	6,398,745	8,869,856	17,491	1.97
Difference	-1,101	-1,279	186	0.21%	97	-35,336	-42,174	-433	-0.35

Further information on the TB Forum and other matters is available at:

www.agriculture.gov.ie/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrol/bovinetb/

Or by contacting us on erad@agriculture.gov.ie