

Animal and Bioscience Department

Title

Schmallenberg virus - Irish dairy, beef and sheep studies

Abstract

Schmallenberg virus (SBV) was first identified in Ireland in Cork in October, 2012 and the highest level of sero-prevalence is currently in Munster. There is currently considerable interest amongst Irish dairy, beef and sheep farmers and their veterinary practitioners in what will happen with this virus infection in our food animal ruminant populations in the future. As this is a novel virus internationally (first isolated in 2011) there are no longitudinal studies on the progression of natural infection in herds or flocks, in particular in seasonally-calved herds as in Ireland. There is currently only one SBV vaccine (launched in June, 2013) licensed for use in Ireland, the efficacy of which in controlling herd or flock infections, is unknown.

Hence, the objectives of this project are: 1) publish a literature review on the effects of SBV and SBV-like infections in cattle (dairy and beef) and in sheep, 2) establish the effects of SBV infection on dairy calf health, calving performance, reproductive performance and production 3) determine the effectiveness of vaccination in reducing SBV-associated problems in dairy cattle over time, 4) establish the effects of SBV exposure in suckler cattle over time and 5) investigate the effects of SBV infection in naïve sheep flocks.

This project will involve collaboration between Teagasc (Moorepark and Athenry), the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (veterinary laboratory service), the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF), TCD and UCD.

Project Leader: John Mee

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