Residue Monitoring in Bovine Herds adjoining Industrial clusters in County Cork

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Surveillance Programme

- Baseline Data
- Herd Health
- Productivity
- Tissue Residues

[Buckley & Larkin 1998, Buckley et al 2007]
Sentinel

- A biological monitor species that accumulates a pollutant in their tissue without significant adverse effects.

- A sentinel is an animal that is used to measure pollution exposure (or effect) in a particular species as a measure of the ambient levels of potential pollutants in an area.

[Beebey, 2001]
Biological Markers

- **Classified as:**
  - Markers of Susceptibility – inter-current disease, background metabolic disease
  - Markers of Effects – signals of tissue dysfunction, e.g. Liver enzymes, morbidity, mortality, clinical pathology & clinical findings
  - Makers of Exposure – residue levels in bovine milk, i.e. Dioxin / PCB levels

[Crowley et al 2013 in-press]
Public Concern – Residues – Persistent Organic Pollutants

- POPs – a Group of toxic chemicals
- Persistent in the environment
- Lipophillic – bioaccumulate in the food chain
- Transported long distances via air and water
- Micro-pollutants – exhibit toxic effects at very low concentrations
- Long latency period – years / decades

[O’Donovan et al 2010]
Dioxins – Regulation EC No. 1881/2006

- **PCDDs** – 75 polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxin congeners
- **PCDFs** - 135 polychlorinated dibenzofurans congeners, 17 are of toxicological concern (e.g. 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 TCDD – most toxic)
- **PCBs** – Polychlorinated biphenyls – a group of 209 congeners based on the biphenyl molecule
- **Dioxin-like PCBs** – 12 are similar to dioxins chemically and toxicologically
Dioxins – Production - Sources

- Not produced intentionally – no known use

- Main potential sources include:
  - Accidental burning
  - Traffic emissions
  - Backyard burning of domestic waste
  - Emissions from domestic heating
  - Emissions from industry, power generation and incinerators

[Ref: EPA 2012]
Biological & Ecological significance

- Toxic effects include endocrine dysfunction, immunotoxicity and carcinogenicity.

- Dioxins and PCBs are now ubiquitous and detectable in most environments worldwide.

- Trace quantities of dioxins and PCBs have been found in the atmosphere, soil, plants, wild/domestic animals and humans.

- 90% of the non-occupations human intake of PCDDs/PCDFs and of dioxin-like PCBs is via ingestion.

- Less than 10% of intake attributed to inhalation and other routes.

- Human breast milk, dairy products & fish can be significant sources – eggs and meats to a lesser extent - as a result of feedstuff contamination.

Dioxins in Cows’ Milk

- Concentration in bovine milk is dependant on contamination of pasture or other feed material
- Dairy cattle:
  - have an average lifespan of 9 years in the region
  - Occupy an important position in the human foodchain – meat and milk
  - Are subject to local environmental pollution through ingestion / inhalation
- Bovine milk suitable matrix for risk of human exposure
Objectives

- To determine the concentration of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in bovine milk samples from target and control herds in the South Cork Region

- To identify any temporal trends in these concentrations over time (2005-2010 and 1991-2004)

- To compare observed levels with data from similar studies
Laboratory Testing

- Milk fat extracted from prepared milk samples was examined for concentrations of dioxins, furans and PCBs using Isotope dilution methods, high performance gas chromatography (HPGC) and high resolution mass spectrometry (HRMS).


- Sample and trend analysis were facilitated and funded by the FSAI.
Results

Total Dioxins + DL PCBs 1991 - 2009

[Ref Crowley et al 2013 in-press]
Dioxins, Dioxin-like PCBs and Marker PCBs
1991 - 2009

- Total WHO TEQ and DL-PCB TEQ in ng/kg fat ranged from 0.41 – 0.71 ng/kg fat total TEQ with an yearly average of 0.56 ng/kg fat TEQ
- The sum of Marker 6 PCBs ranged from 0.39 – 0.6 ug/kg fat with yearly averages of 0.51 and 0.49 ug/kg fat (2008 & 2009, respectively)
- Results for Control samples range from 0.29 – 0.41 ng/kg fat total TEQ with yearly averages of 0.35 and 0.39
- The sum of Marker 6 PCBs ranged from 0.29 – 0.47 ug/kg fat with yearly averages of 0.4 and 0.38 (2008 & 2009, respectively)
Residue Trends in Bovine Milk

- Total dioxin content in Target Herds was highest between 1991 & 1992 – peaked at a WHO-TEQ of 1.87 ng TEQ/kg milk fat
- Total dioxin decreased to approx. 0.85 ng TEQ/kg milk fat in the late 1990s
- Further decreases were evident throughout the 2000s and generally stabilised at or below 0.6 ng TEQ/kg milk fat, which is 10% of the recommended level (Reg. EC No. 1881/2006)
- Similar trends were evident in the Control Herds
- Total dioxin WHO/TEQ in both Target & Control milk have exhibited strong downward trends – approx. 45% overall
Comparative Studies

- The reduction in total dioxins in milk produced in the Cork Harbour area is similar to the trend observed in the UK and globally EU SCF, 2000 and also in Irish cows’ milk.
- A mean 33% decrease in dioxin levels nationally was noted between 1995 & 2004 (EPA 2005).
- Average values for total dioxins measured by EPA since 2000 were 0.44 and 0.35 WHO-TEQ ng/kg milk fat (Cork Harbour and adjacent areas).
- The results from this study are in line with those from other EPA surveys, both locally and nationally.
Conclusion

- The observed fall in PCDD/Fs and, in particular, PCBs in Target and Control bovine milk between 1991 and 2001, may be attributed to:
  - Regulations banning burning slack and bituminous coal in the designated area of Cork
  - The introduction of unleaded petrol and improved energy efficiencies
  - The introduction of the integrated pollution control IPC licensing system (EPA 1993)
  - Significant investment by industry in stack infrastructure (scrubbers, disposal of fly ash etc)
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References