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Analysis of Epidemiology Reports on 3975 Herd Breakdowns in Ten DVO Regions* During 1987-90

J.M. Griffin and T. Haheisy

Reports on 3975 herd breakdowns were transferred from the Scheme computer files to personal computers and forwarded to the Tuberculosis Investigation Unit for analysis. The following is a summary of some of the findings.

- a. 79% of the breakdowns involved the home farm.
- b. 43% of the restricted holdings had outfarms; 13% of the breakdowns involved outfarms.
- c. 12% of the restricted holdings had access to rented land; 3% of the breakdowns involved cattle kept on rented land.
- d. 43% of the herds were "self-contained".
- e. 13% of the herds had bought-in cattle since the last tuberculin test, which were subsequently deemed reactor.
- f. 19% of the herds had sold potentially infected cattle prior to restriction.
- g. 32% of the herds had cattle which had been in the herd at the last breakdown.
- h. 18% of the herds had reactors which had been in the herd at the last breakdown.
- i. 6% of the herds had reactors which had been inconclusive reactors at a previous test.
- j. The mean number of contiguous herds was 6.8.
- k. In the case of 46% of breakdowns, contiguous herds had been restricted prior to the breakdown of the herd under study.
- l. In the case of 24% of breakdowns, contiguous herds were restricted after the breakdown of the herd under study.
- m. 31% of herds had boundary fencing which was considered inadequate to prevent direct contact with neighbouring cattle.
- n. In the case of 14% of herds, slurry management was considered likely to aid dissemination of Tb.
- o. In 26% of herds, farm management practices were considered likely to facilitate the spread of infection.

The sources identified as the origin of the outbreaks were :-

Cause	% outbreaks	Cause	% outbreaks
Lateral spread	25	Wildlife	14
Bought in	11	Non-specific	
Residual	14	Not clear	35
Mechanical	1	Unknown	

* The project was undertaken by Associate Members of the Unit in the following DVOs: Cork South, Donegal, Kerry, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Longford, Roscommon, Tipperary North and Wexford.