



Meeting: Bovine TB Stakeholder Forum – Meeting 14
Date: 04 May 2022
Time: 11:00 – 13:00
Location: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine - Backweston Campus

Attendees

Minister:

Charlie McConalogue

Chair:

Michael Cronin, Chair TB Stakeholder Forum

Working Group Chairs:

Sean Brady, Implementation Working Group (IWG)

John Griffin, Chair Scientific Working Group (SWG)

Organisations:

Conor Mulvihill, Dairy Industry Ireland; Des Morrison, Paul Smyth, ICMSA; Ray Doyle, James O'Donnell, ICOS; Hugh Farrell, Neasa Fitzgibbon, ICOSA; TJ Maher, Tomas Bourke, IFA; John Keane, Shane Fitzgerald, Macra na Feirme; Simon More, UCD; Claire Crowley, NPWS; Kevin Twomey, Farmer; David Graham, James Lynch, Animal Health Ireland; Pádraic Fogarty, Irish Wildlife Trust; Michael Miley, Communications.

Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM):

Patricia Reilly, Eoin Ryan, Conor O'Mahony, Philip Breslin, Rosanne Greene.

Bovine TB Forum Secretariat:

Karina Wrigley, James O'Keeffe, Donal Mooney, Anthony Stringer.

Apologies:

Gerard Kiely (Chair FWG), Damien Barret (DAFM), Joe Ryan (Meat Industry Ireland), John Mee (Teagasc)

Minutes

Item	Minutes
Introduction by Chair Michael Cronin	The Chair welcomed the Minister and representatives to the meeting and gave a brief overview of the TB Forum and its work to date. The focus of the meeting is to agree the next steps of the TB strategy (2023 -2025). The chair acknowledged Eoin Ryan and thanked him on behalf of the forum for his hard work and contribution to the TB eradication programme. He wished him well on his move within the Department. Damien Barret will replace Eoin Ryan.
Introduction by Minister Charlie McConalogue	The Minister thanked representatives for meeting in person and for the positive and collective effort the forum is making to help eradicate bovine TB. The Minister talked about farming families and the fear and stress that comes with a TB test. Minister McConalogue acknowledged the ongoing implementation of the 2030 strategy, the progress of the wildlife programme and current communications. The Minister said the structure of the TB forum

	has been effective at bringing plans into actions. Pledging his own commitment, the Minister talked about the challenging times ahead. He thanked Eoin Ryan for his commitment and ability to communicate and wished him well. The Minister also thanked Michael Cronin for his support.
Minutes of Previous Meeting	The minutes of meeting 13 (15 February 2022) were agreed.
Update on TB disease trends (including WGS and wildlife)	DAFM gave an update on current disease trends and presented a whole genome case study. DAFM also gave an update on the wildlife programme which included an overview of a vaccination heat map and a statistical update. The badger activity notification app has received 545 notifications to date. The badger activity collaboration between the farming community and the Department was praised. Questions and answers followed. The Minister's financial commitment to the wildlife programme and the wildlife programme's current resources were discussed.
Further Strategy Measures 2023 - 2025	The chair said this discussion will follow on from previous TB forum and bilateral meetings. Most of the current strategy has been or will be implemented. 'We want to do more and are now left with the difficult decisions.' A list of strategy measures was given to representatives. The chair opened the discussion. The farming organisations talked about farmers taking on inflation costs, the struggle of cash flow problems and the financial burden some farmers experience during a breakdown. Also addressed by the farming organisations was the farmer's financial and labour contribution to the TB eradication programme. They also addressed the implementation of the new EU animal health law pointing out that farming organisations will not agree to farmers paying for any further additional TB tests. There must be an input into the terms of reference of the Deer Management Forum, however, wildlife representatives noted that wider stakeholder input must also be given consideration. The Minister said he will continue to engage with the TB Forum and its financial working group (FWG). Rising expenditure is coinciding with diminishing EU co-funding, and not making progress, now and in the future, will have an impact on farming families and the State. It was noted by the farming organisations that the FWG must advance its discussions. The TB programme's financial model will be discussed by the FWG. The future of sustainable agriculture and its long-term funding was raised and discussed. The chair went through each of the (9) further strategies with the forum. Michael Miley commented on the improved communication between the forum's stakeholders and the success of the eradication programmes' current communications (articles, podcasts, RTÉ and the collaboration with Teagasc). Simon More addressed the question and dichotomy of 'are we doing enough?' and talked about the use of scientific models. Simon More outlined we need to concentrate on three areas (1) Governance and cost sharing (2) Wildlife and (3) Are we doing enough to control risk of TB in cattle. Suggestions were made by representatives and the further strategies were agreed.
Any other Business	The international M.bovis conference will be held in Galway and it is suggested that a special sitting of the TB Forum will be held there. There will be a chance for the forum to talk to international experts.
Date of next meeting and close of meeting.	The chair thanked the Minister and representatives for coming to the meeting in person and acknowledged the importance of having this type of discussion face to face. It is proposed to have the next meeting of the TB Forum around September 2022. In the meantime, the working groups will continue to meet.

Action Points

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| 1 | Deer Forum representatives to present to TB Forum / IWG when their group is established. |
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