



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine

# Diagnosing and managing flock health issues – on farm experience

SEAMUS FAGAN ATHLONE REGIONAL VETERINARY LAB.

# Flock Health

- ▶ Is there a problem? Records are essential
- ▶ What is the cause? Ask vet, Teagasc adviser, other farmers, carry out testing.
- ▶ How do I fix it? Knowing the problem is half the battle



## **Sheep Farmers need to know and record:**

- 1 How many adult sheep and lambs live and die each year?
- 2 The age of the lambs and adult sheep when they die?
- 3 The major causes of deaths in their flock?
4. BCS for adults; Growth rate for lambs

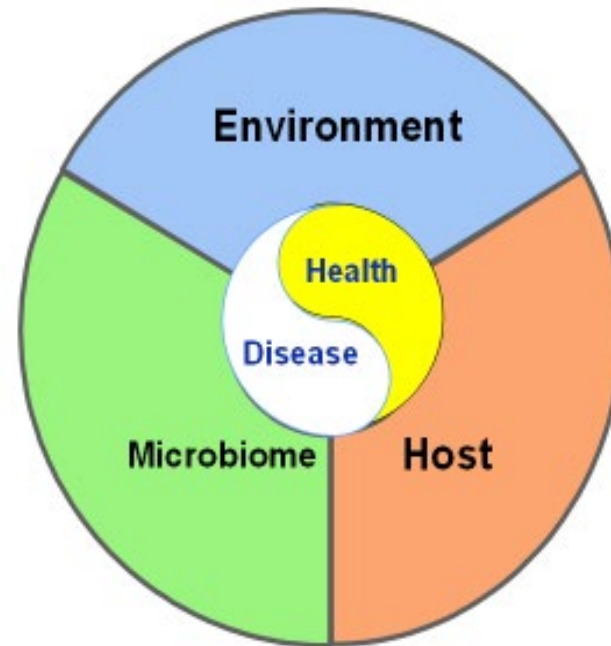
## **This information will allow them to:**

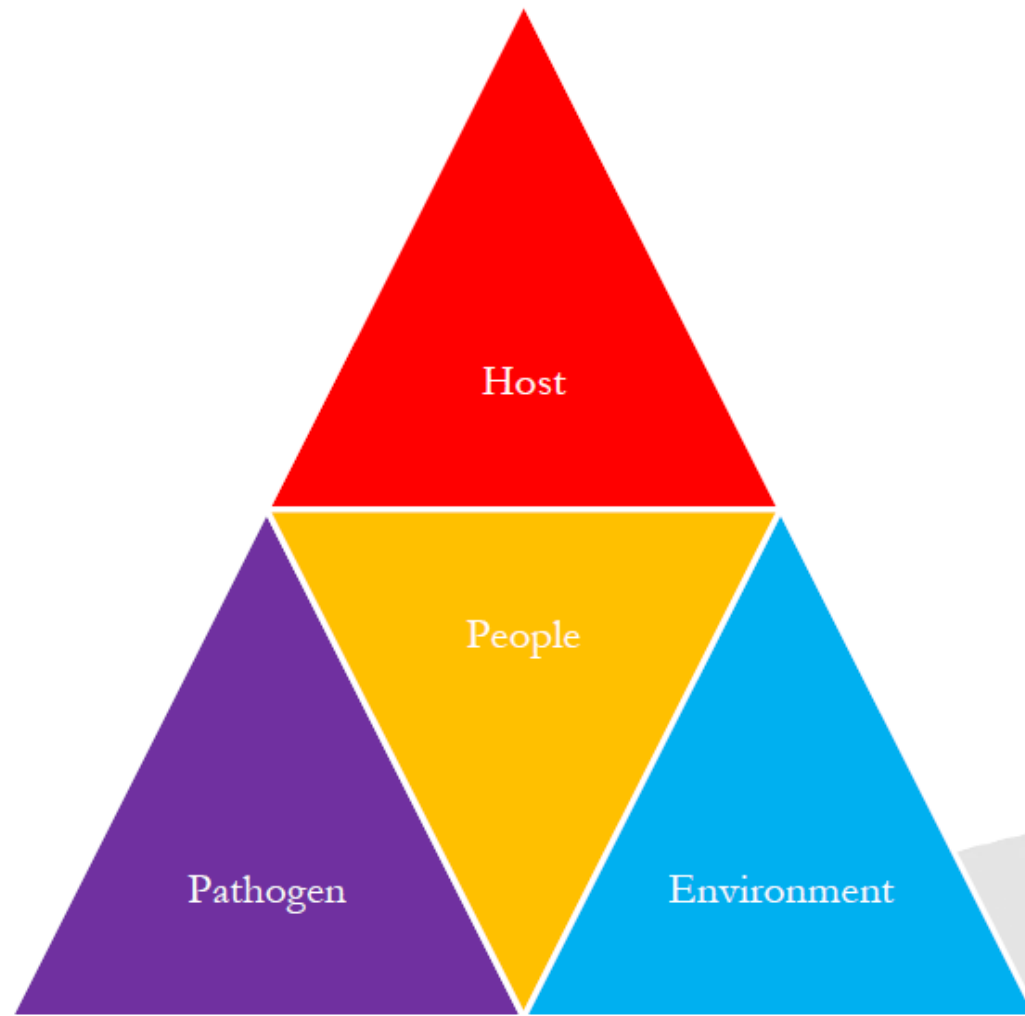
- 1 Target management decisions to improve flock health.
- 2 Improve the profitability, sustainability and welfare of their flocks



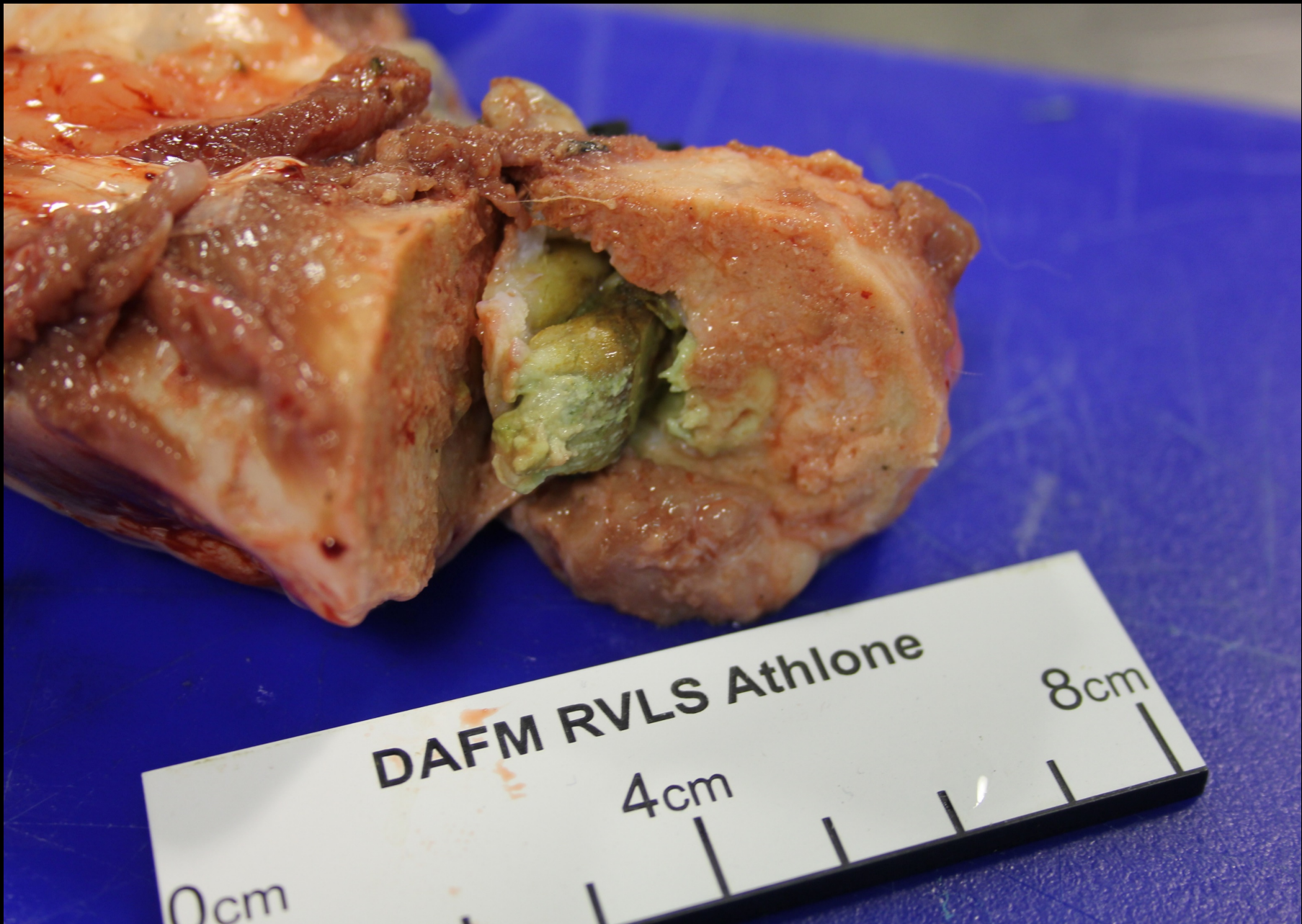
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# A Framework

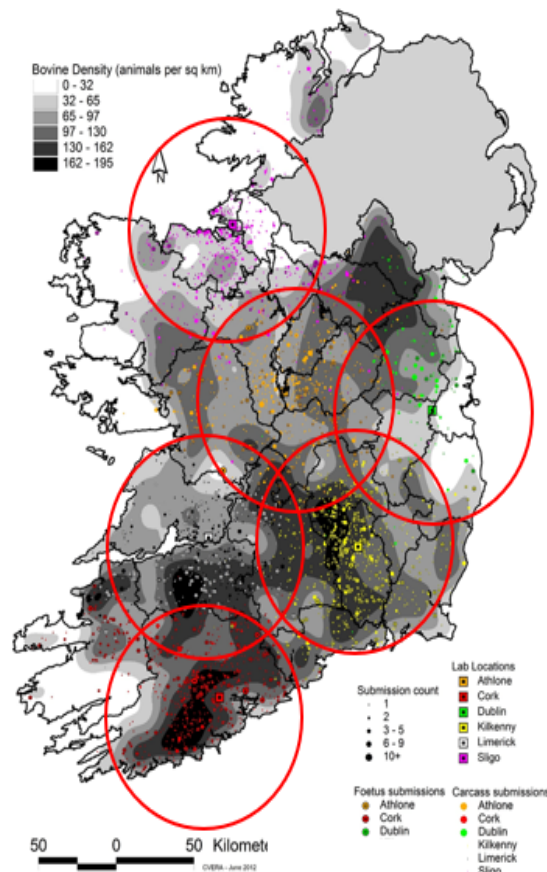




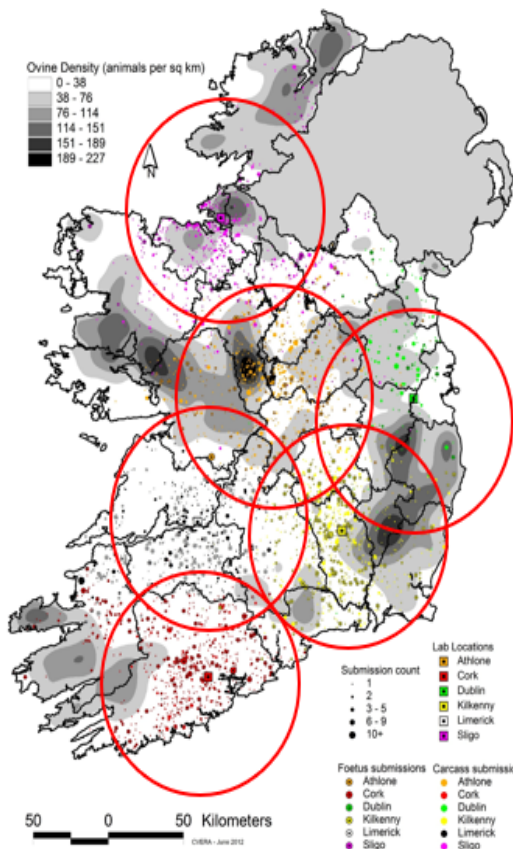




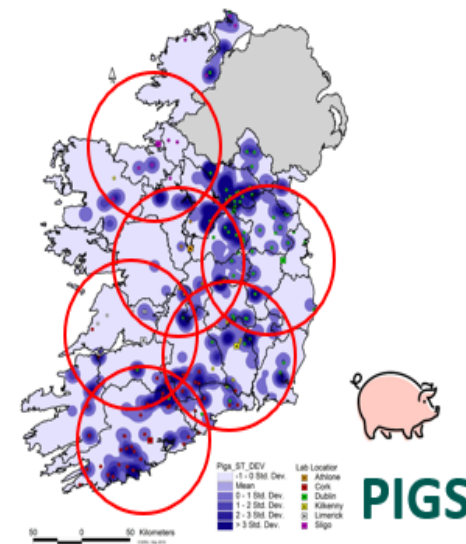
# Current RVL Species Coverage



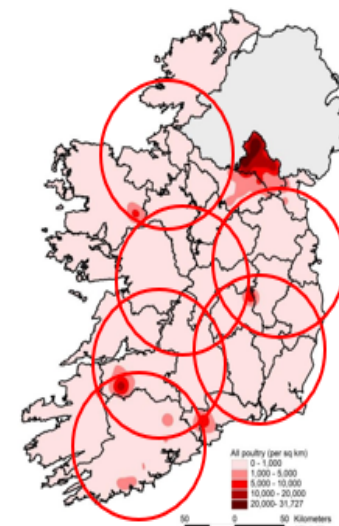
**CATTLE**



**SHEEP**



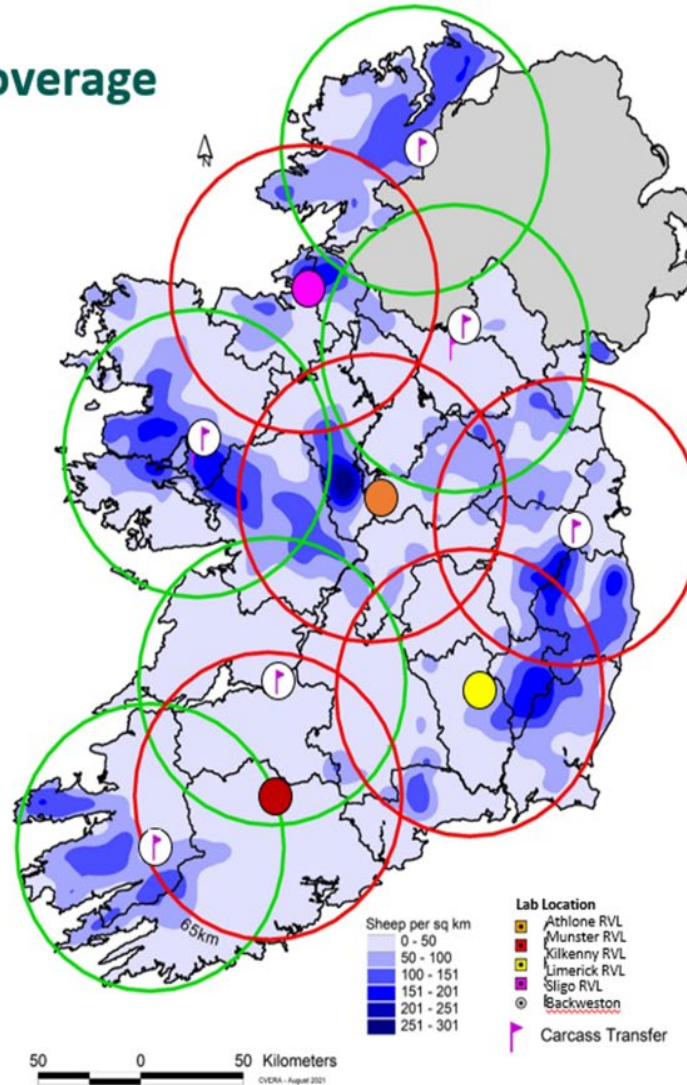
**PIGS**



**POULTRY**



## Future RVL Sheep Coverage



# What is an iceberg disease?

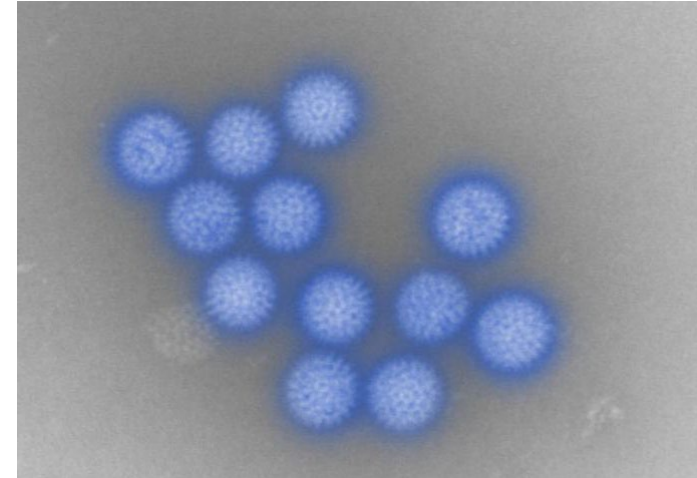
- An iceberg disease is one where the illness and losses we see in animals (clinical disease) is only a small proportion of the true number of infected animals
- **Iceberg diseases are deceptive** – they are usually well established in a flock or herd by the time you see the first impact.
- You can buy them in when you buy apparently ‘healthy sheep’
- 5 main Iceberg Diseases
  - Maedi-Visna Disease
  - Caseous Lymphadenitis
  - Ovine Pulmonary Adenomatosis (OPA) = ‘Jaagsiekte’
  - Pseudotuberculosis (Johnes Disease)
  - Border Disease



# Bluetongue



1. Bluetongue is a viral disease
2. Affects ruminants and camelids
3. Twenty-seven strains of BTV have been recognized worldwide
  - 11 of which have previously been reported in Europe
4. Usually spread by biting midges
5. Seasonal (April- Nov inclusive) which mirrors warmer temperatures which facilitate midge activity
6. Not a zoonotic disease – no danger to human health or food safety



# Clinical Signs of Bluetongue



- Inappetance (loss or lack of appetite)
- Drop in milk yield
- Reddening of the mucus membranes
- Sores on the nose, gum and dental pads
- Swelling of the face, lips and tongue  
( i.e. “Bluetongue”)
- Breathing difficulties if the tongue swells
- Drooling
- Discharge from the eyes and/or nose
- Lameness
- Abortion, stillbirth or deformities in offspring
- Possible death

# Clinical Signs of Bluetongue



BTV infected sheep with profuse nasal discharge and swollen face.



BTV infected sheep with profuse nasal discharge and swollen face.



BTV infected sheep with coronitis.



BTV infected cow with conjunctivitis and nasal discharge.

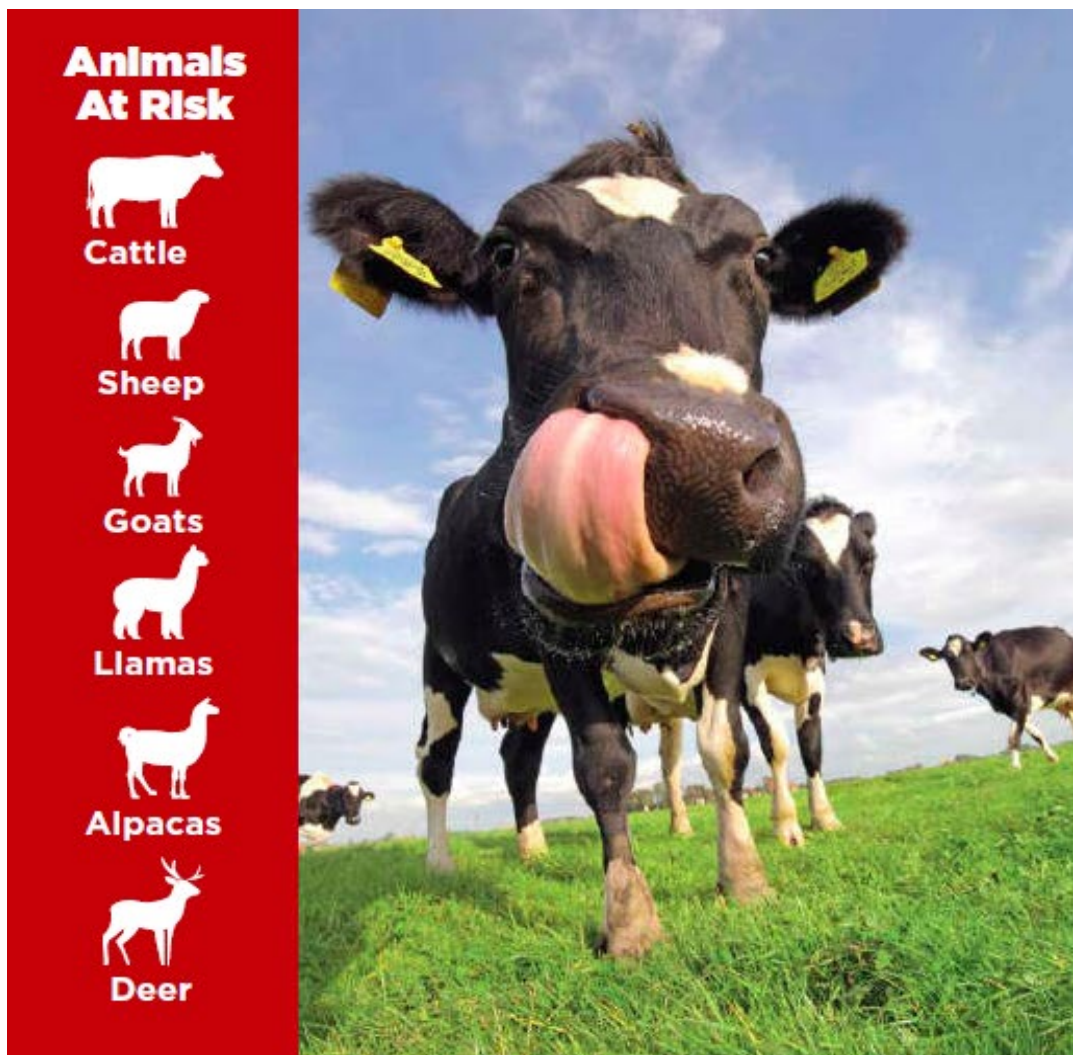


BTV infected cow with erosion of the nasal mucosa.



BTV infected cow with a swollen udder and crusting of the teats.

# Keep Ireland Free From Bluetongue Campaign



## KEEP BLUETONGUE OUT OF IRELAND

Play your part in protecting Irish livestock from Bluetongue - a serious disease found across mainland Europe



Understand the disease risks if importing animals – ask your vet or Regional Veterinary Office for advice



Avoid importing animals when midges that spread Bluetongue are most active (April – November)



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