

NI BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS (bTB) STUDY

Farmers Urged to Take Part in Survey on Bovine TB Impacts

Farmers across Northern Ireland are being encouraged to share their experiences of bovine tuberculosis (bTB) through a new online survey which has just been launched.

The study, led by The Andersons Centre on behalf of the Ulster Farmers' Union and partner organisations (the Dairy Council for Northern Ireland and the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC)), aims to build a clearer picture of the wider economic, environmental and wellbeing costs associated with a bTB breakdown.

While government figures are available on the direct costs of bTB, this project examines the indirect effects that farm businesses face when their herd becomes infected. This includes a range of other financial costs that DAERA compensation does not cover (e.g. labour costs, lost milk output, biosecurity costs etc.), operational disruption, environmental challenges and impacts on mental health. The results will provide robust evidence to inform future policy discussions and support services for affected farmers.

The chart below highlights how bTB herd incidence is a significant issue across many parts of Northern Ireland, with some areas (e.g. Newtownards) seeing incidence rates above 15% in the 12 months to June 2025. Incidence across Northern Ireland over the same period is approaching 11%. This underlines the importance of gathering farmer feedback to ensure the true on-farm impacts are properly understood.

Commenting on the importance of farmer participation, Michael Haverty from The Andersons Centre said:

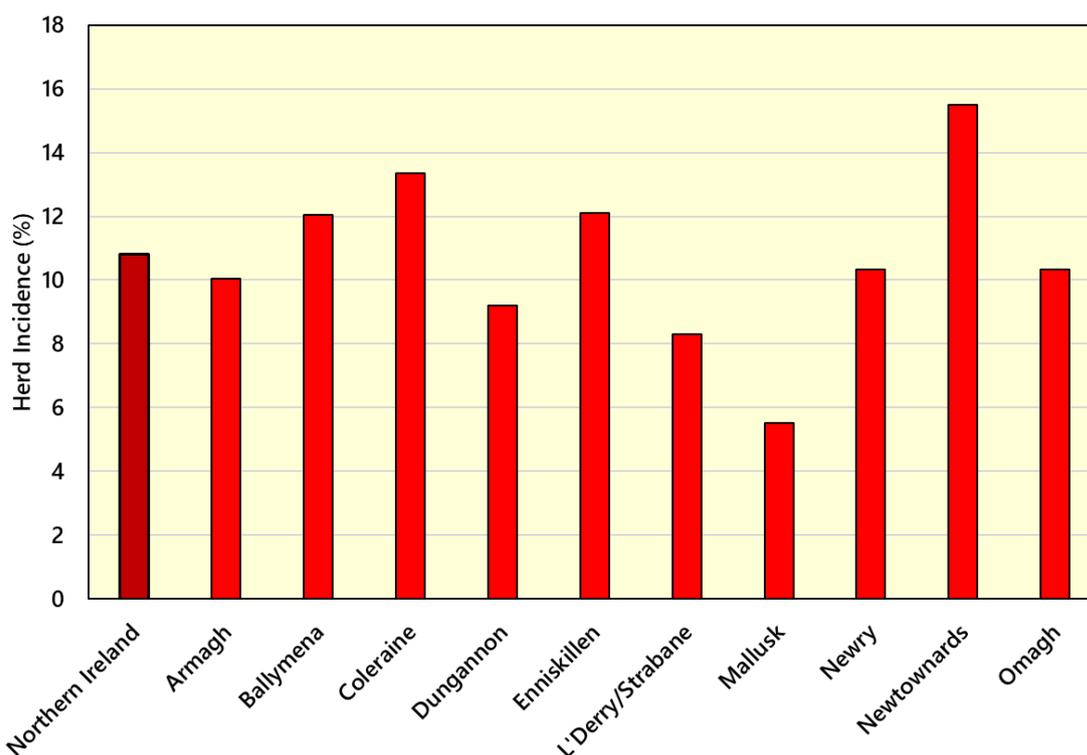
"We appreciate how difficult and stressful a bTB breakdown can be for farmers, not just financially but also for the wider running of the farm and the wellbeing of farming families. To make sure this study properly reflects the reality on the ground, we need as many farmers as possible to complete the survey. Your input will provide vital evidence to help shape how the industry and policy makers respond to the challenges caused by bTB."

UFU deputy president Glenn Cuddy said:

"Bovine TB remains one of the most significant and costly animal health challenges facing our farming community. While the direct impacts are well known, there are substantial hidden costs that farmers are left to absorb and these remain undocumented."

"To get a clear and accurate picture of the full financial burden TB places on farm businesses, the UFU has partnered with the Livestock and Meat Commission, the Dairy Council NI and the Andersons Centre to gather concrete data, but we need farmers' help to do this. Their input is vital. By taking just 20 minutes to complete the survey, farmers can share their experiences and help to build a better understanding of the true financial impact TB has on affected families."

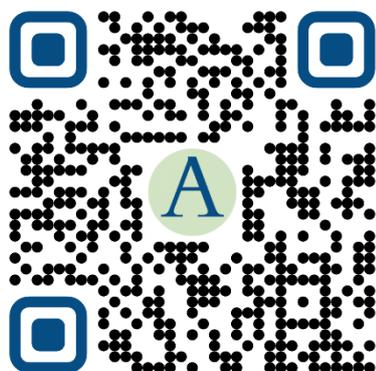
bTB Annual Herd Incidence to June 2025 by Divisional Veterinary Office (DVO) Areas



Source: DAERA Tuberculosis Statistics (2025), analysed by The Andersons Centre

Farmers can take part in the survey via the following link or by scanning the QR code:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XB23FZC>



The survey takes around 20 minutes to complete. It is open to all beef and dairy farmers in Northern Ireland. All responses will be treated in strict confidence.

For further information, please contact The Andersons Centre.

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