

From: HQ

Date: Friday 20 March 2020 at 11:31

Subject: VetALERT 10e/20 – COVID-19 – Update 20th March 2020

Dear Veterinary Ireland Member,

With the news of a significant increase in COVID-19 cases in the State yesterday (up 191 to 557 confirmed cases) and the third death associated with the virus, our thoughts go to all those affected by this global emergency.

The following **COVID-19 Updates** may be useful to you in keeping up to date with the COVID-19 emergency and in keeping yourself, family, friends and colleagues safe.

Take care and God bless.

Peter Bishton
Deputy Chief Executive

COVID-19 Updates 20th March 2020.

(NB: Text below in **Blue** provide **direct links** to the relevant websites/documents.)

COVID-19 - Veterinary Profession “Essential” During COVID-19

Joint OIE/WVA Statement

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Veterinary Association (WVA) have issued a joint statement, drawing attention to the essential position of the global veterinary profession during the COVID-19 pandemic. The international organisations have highlighted the specific veterinary activities which are key to ensuring a continuum in public health, especially in food safety, disease prevention and emergency management during this period of emergency.

The full statement is **attached to this email** and can be found at:

<https://www.oie.int/en/for-the-media/press-releases/detail/article/covid-19-and-veterinary-activities-designated-as-essential/>

Veterinary Ireland / DAFM

Veterinary Ireland has been in ongoing contact with DAFM in relation to the implications of Covid-19 for the veterinary profession. DAFM’s current stated policy is that the agricultural industry will be kept moving to the greatest extent possible, factories are to continue to operate, TB testing is to continue, exports are to continue, etc. in compliance with HSE guidelines.

Veterinary Ireland has reiterated to DAFM that veterinary activities are considered as essential services and, at present, DAFM has indicated that there should be no restrictions on the provision of essential veterinary services. DAFM is aware of the OIE statement and Veterinary Ireland has indicated that essential veterinary services would also include the activities of companion animal vets, and DAFM is broadly in agreement with this interpretation.

COVID-19 - IRELAND

Ireland is now operating a **DELAY STRATEGY**.

For a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and answers go to:

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/frequentlyaskedquestions/FAQs%2012.7.pdf>

The current advice from the HSE is that if you have a fever and/or a cough that you should stay at home, regardless of your travel or contact history.

If you have returned from an area that is subject to travel restrictions due to COVID-19 (check www.dfa.ie) you should restrict your movement for 14 days.

All Citizens are advised to:

- ⇒ **Reduce** social interactions
- ⇒ **Keep a distance** of 2m between you and other people
- ⇒ **Do not** shake hands or make close contact where possible
- ⇒ **Wash** your hands well and often to avoid contamination
- ⇒ **Cover** your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue
- ⇒ **Avoid** touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hand
- ⇒ **Clean** and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

FVE - COVID-19 Webpages

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) have set up a special COVID-19 Section on its website, containing relevant information for Pan-European veterinarians. The FVE information can be found at <https://www.fve.org/covid-19-faqs/>

Included on the FVE website are a set of useful documents, including FVE/FECAVA Infographics for [veterinary practitioners](#) and for [pet owners](#) – these two Infographics can be found below and are also attached to this COVID-19 Update.

COVID-19 Pandemic Financial Supports

The Government has announced [financial measures to support individuals and businesses impacted by COVID-19](#) - while some are in the process of being established, some are already available, and include support for bank borrowers, increase in limit to €50 for contactless card payments, the deferral of stamp duty on credit cards from April to July 2020, and the deferral of Local Property Tax payments from 21st March to 21st May 2020.

As well as the usual supports (e.g. [Short Time Work](#)), there are new or enhanced benefits including [Enhanced Illness Benefit](#) - normal social insurance requirements for [Illness Benefit](#) will be changed and the 6-day waiting period will not apply in COVID-19 cases, with €305 per week for a maximum of 2 weeks medically-required self-isolation or for the full duration of absence from work following a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). [Supplementary Welfare Allowance](#) has had the means test removed.

For the latest information on COVID-19 benefits and reliefs from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) click [HERE](#).

COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment

This is a new social welfare payment for employees and self-employed people who are unemployed or who have their hours of work reduced during the COVID-19 emergency. Full details can be found at [GOV.IE](https://gov.ie) or on through [Citizens Information](#).

COVID-19 Employer Refund Scheme

The Small Firms Association (SFA) have advised that details have now been announced of the [Covid Employer Refund Scheme](#). Please find attached FAQs on the scheme and Revenue guidelines to employers and payroll providers.

COVID-19 - HSE Poster on Symptoms

The HSE has devised a simple chart in relation to the symptoms of COVID-19 compared to other common illnesses. The chart is copied below:

Symptoms	Coronavirus <small>Symptoms range from mild to severe</small>	Cold <small>Gradual onset of symptoms</small>	Flu <small>Abrupt onset of symptoms</small>
Fever	Common	Rare	Common
Cough	Common* (Usually Dry)	Mild	Common* (Usually Dry)
Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
Aches and Pains	Sometimes	Common	Common
Sore Throat	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
Headaches	Sometimes	Rare	Common
Shortness of Breath	Sometimes	No	No
Runny or Stuffy Nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes
Diarrhoea	Rare	No	Sometimes for Children
Sneezing	No	Common	No

Sources: World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

HSE | Rialtas na Míreann
Government of Ireland

COVID-19 – Taking care of your Mental Health

During the COVID-19 Emergency, it is equally important to look after your mental health as it is your physical health.

As well as the Veterinary Specific supports through the [Veterinary Assistance Programme](#) and the new [Vet Support Ireland](#) wellbeing service, there is also now a specific page on yourmentalhealth.ie with content related to Covid-19. Go to: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

There is also a link to the mental health content on the main Covid-19 information page on www.hse.ie – go to <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

VCI - UCC Guidelines for Vets

The Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) advise that University College Cork has put together guidelines to assist veterinary professionals during the covid-19 emergency in relation to Social Distancing, Quarantine and Social Isolation - the Guidelines can be found on the VCI website (www.vci.ie) or by clicking [here](#) to view.