



## **VETERINARY IRELAND PRESS RELEASES**

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### **VETS CALL FOR ALL OUT BAN ON IMPORTS FROM BLUETONGUE RESTRICTED ZONES**

Veterinary Ireland, the representative Organisation for veterinary practitioners in Ireland, is calling on the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to extend her ban on the importation of all cattle sheep and goats from Bluetongue Restricted Zones. The emerging information on the ability of this virus to spread by means not previously understood is hugely significant. Existing import control measures are now inadequate.

“Veterinary Ireland fully supports Minister Coughlan’s confirmation on February 22<sup>nd</sup> that she had signed a Statutory Instrument suspending the importation of certain cattle and sheep from Bluetongue-restricted zones” said Ciara Feeney, President of Veterinary Ireland. “We would urge the minister to go the next step and suspend the importation of **all** cattle, sheep and goats from these restricted zones”.

The Organisation believes that an all-Ireland policy to protect this island is now an immediate priority and Veterinary Ireland is also urging Minister Gildernew to implement the same restrictions in Northern Ireland.

The Organisation understands the need to remain as up-to-date as possible on this potentially devastating disease and to this end the President, Ciara Feeney, and the Chairperson of the Food Animal Group, Edwin Murphy, will attend an international symposium on Bluetongue disease on March 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> in Brussels.

“Awareness of the serious implications of the present EU movements of livestock cannot be understated”, according to Ms. Feeney. “The veterinary profession has a responsibility to demand whatever responses are appropriate to protect the national herd from this disease and to highlight the welfare consequences of acting too late”, she concluded.

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