

DARD Quarterly Disease Report

Bovine brucellosis (BR), bovine tuberculosis (TB) and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)

Quarterly Update: January - March 2009

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Executive Summary

Bovine Brucellosis (BR)

The fall in **brucellosis incidence** from its peak (annual herd incidence of 1.43%) at the start of 2002 reached its lowest point in October 2005 (0.34%). The rise in herd incidence since October 2005 peaked in October 2006 (0.6%) and then has stayed relatively level until the autumn of 2007 where there was another rise in incidence which peaked in September 2008 (1.06%). Since then, there has been a decreasing annual herd incidence. The **annual herd incidence is now 0.60%** while the **annual animal incidence is 0.029%**. The annual herd incidence where BR infection is confirmed by bacteriological culture remained similar from October 2006 to June 2008. Since then there has been a steady decline in confirmed annual herd incidence (0.27% to 0.14% in January 2009).

A decrease in the herd incidence of BR was observed in nine of the ten Divisional Veterinary Offices (DVOs) with one Newry DVO having an annual herd incidence of greater than 1% (1.87%). Annual animal incidence fell in seven DVOs.

The number of **new BR herd breakdowns** during the current quarter was 21, which is a 71% decrease over that observed during the same period last year (n = 73). The number of **BR reactors also showed a decrease of 63%** (40 cf. 144) over this period. The changes in incidence over the last year were mainly due to the reduction in the number of BR breakdowns in Armagh DVO. Newry DVO accounted for 55% of all BR reactors. The number of **BR negative-in-contact (NICs)** animals taken during the current quarter (717 animals) **showing a 63% decrease** on the number removed during the same quarter in 2008 (1,929 animals). The median **BR reactor removal time** for 2008 was **14.4 working days** (cf. 12.3 days during 2007) with **73%** of reactors being removed within the 15 working day target (cf. 74% in 2007).

The number of animals tested was similar over the comparable quarters (n = 399,220) as was the number of blood samples tested (n = 424,930). The introduction of the **premovement testing requirement** in December 2004 has detected **52 BR reactors** from **694,600 animal tests** with a further **5,686 inconclusive** BR reactors.

Bovine Tuberculosis (TB)

The incidence of **TB has shown a slight rise over the last year (5.58% cf. 5.35%)**. The peak incidence occurred during the spring of 2003 when the annual herd incidence was 10.2%. The **annual herd incidence is now 5.58%** while the **annual animal incidence is 0.519%**. A decreasing level of TB was observed in four of the ten Divisional Veterinary Offices (DVOs). Newtownards DVO has the highest current annual TB herd incidence of 8.21% while Larne DVO has the lowest herd incidence (3.59%).

The number of **TB reactor** animals taken during the current quarter (**2,237 animals**) was **1.5% higher** than the number removed during the same quarter in 2008 (2,204 reactors). The median **TB reactor removal time** for 2008 has improved (**11.6 working days** compared to 12.3 days over 2007) with **84%** being removed within the 15 working day target (cf. 79% over 2007).

The number of **new TB herd breakdowns** during the current quarter was 7.5% higher (387 cf. 360 new TB herd breakdowns) relative to the same quarter in 2008 with the 12-month moving average being 108 new breakdown herds per month (cf. 105 in March 2008).

Forty-six percent of the province's 1.62 million cattle (held in 23,310 herds) were tested during this quarter.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)

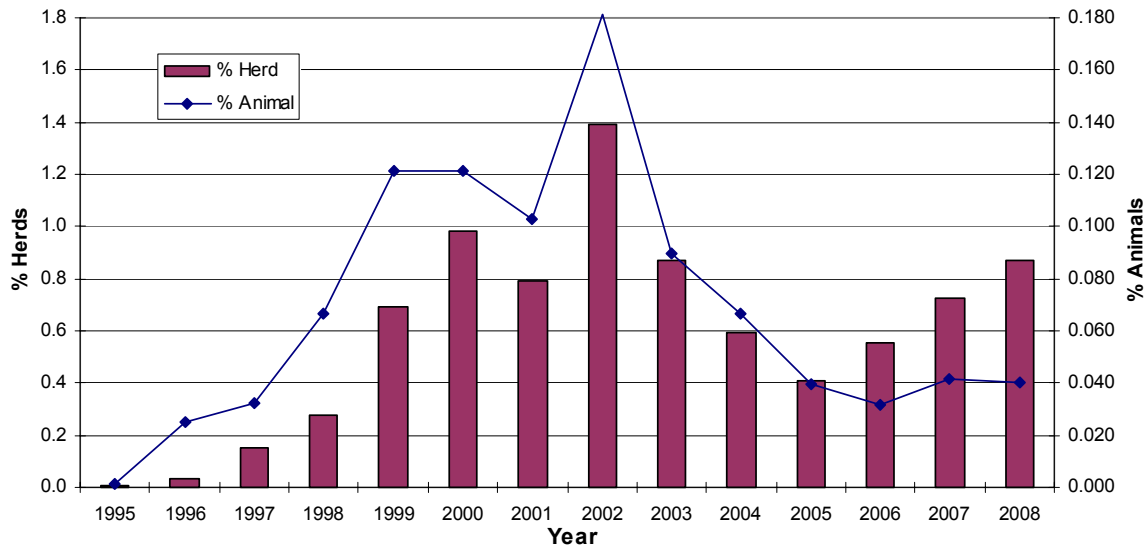
The number of cases has declined to small number in recent years but 2007 saw an increase in the number of cases (14 cases cf. 10 cases in 2006). However, only four cases were confirmed during 2008 with a further two cases being disclosed during the first quarter of 2009. The vast majority of cases are now found through the active surveillance programme, particularly in the over 24-month fallen animal surveillance. To date, there have been **2,185 confirmed cases** of BSE from 1,513 farms in the province. None of the 45 clinical suspect cases since the start of 2006 have been confirmed as having BSE.

1. Bovine Brucellosis (BR)

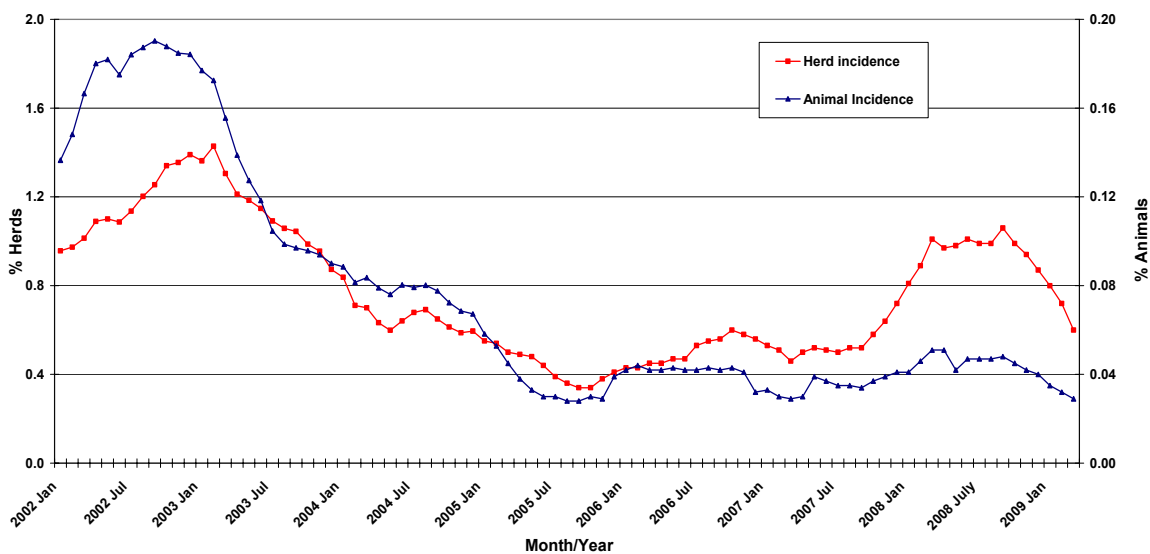
1.1 Disease trends

Of the 20,740 herds (971,600 cattle) within Northern Ireland that were actively monitored for Brucellosis by blood or bulk milk sampling, there were 125 new breakdown herds over the last 12 month period (280 Br reactor animals). This is 59% lower (211 new herd breakdowns) than in the previous 13-24 months. The current annual herd incidence was 0.60% with an animal incidence of 0.029%. For the last 13-24 months, annual herd incidence was 1.01% and animal incidence was 0.051%. Peak herd incidence (1.43%) occurred in early 2003.

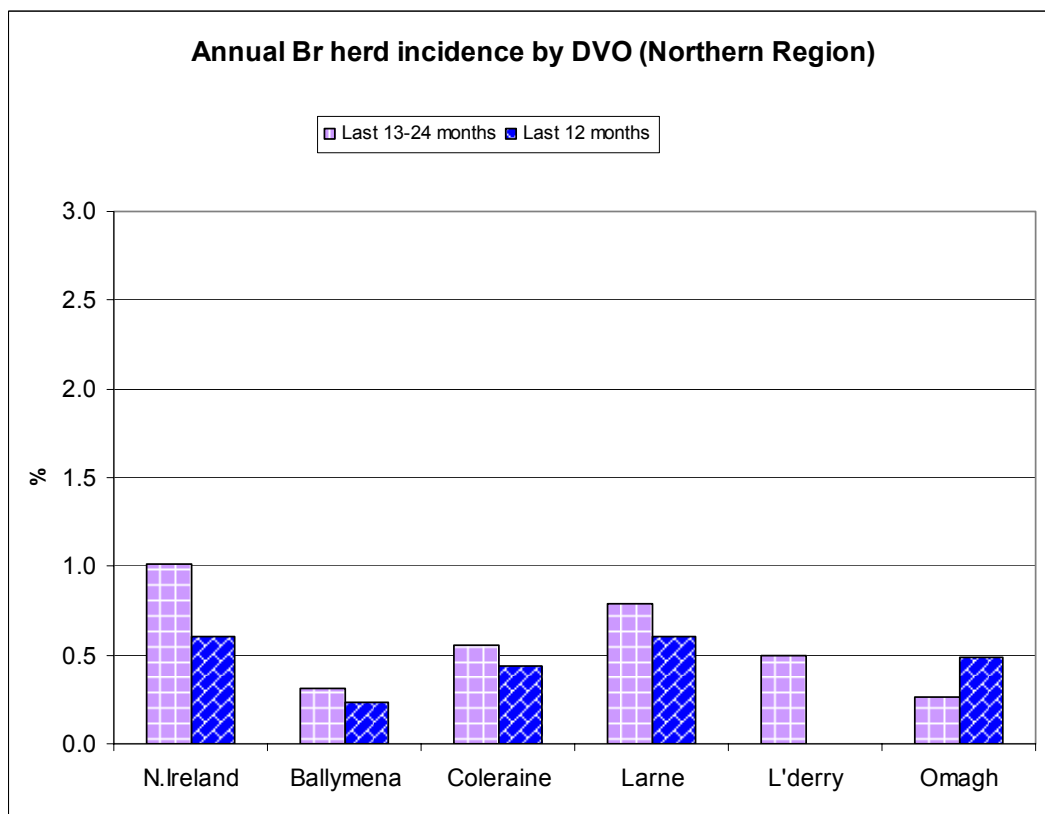
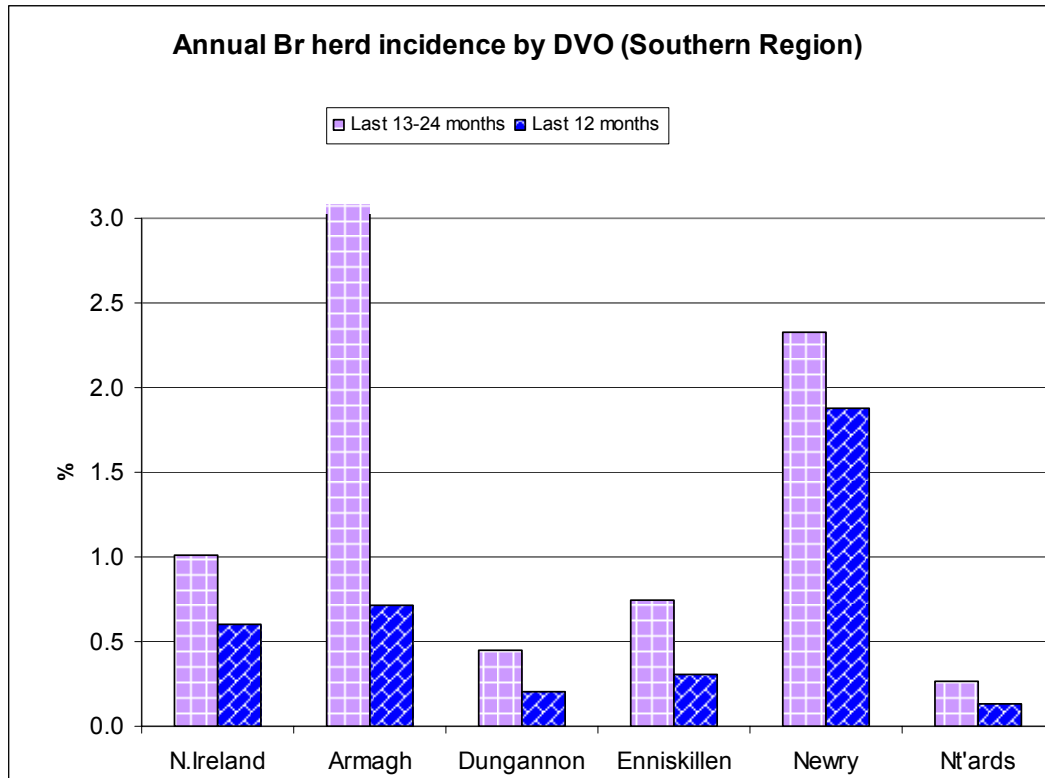
BR annual herd and animal incidence:
1995 to 2008



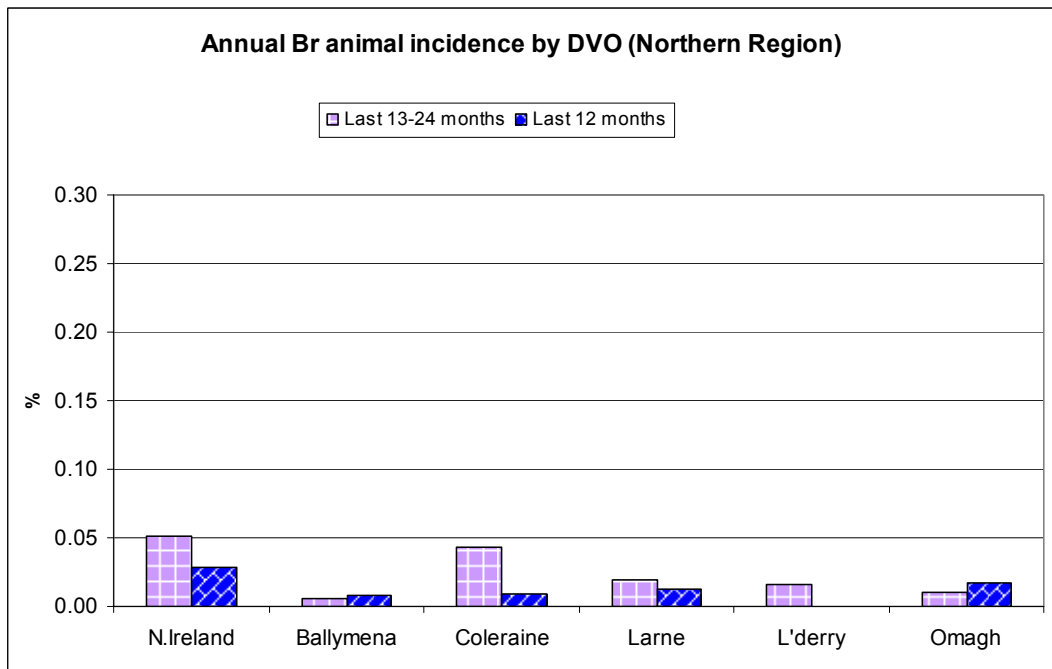
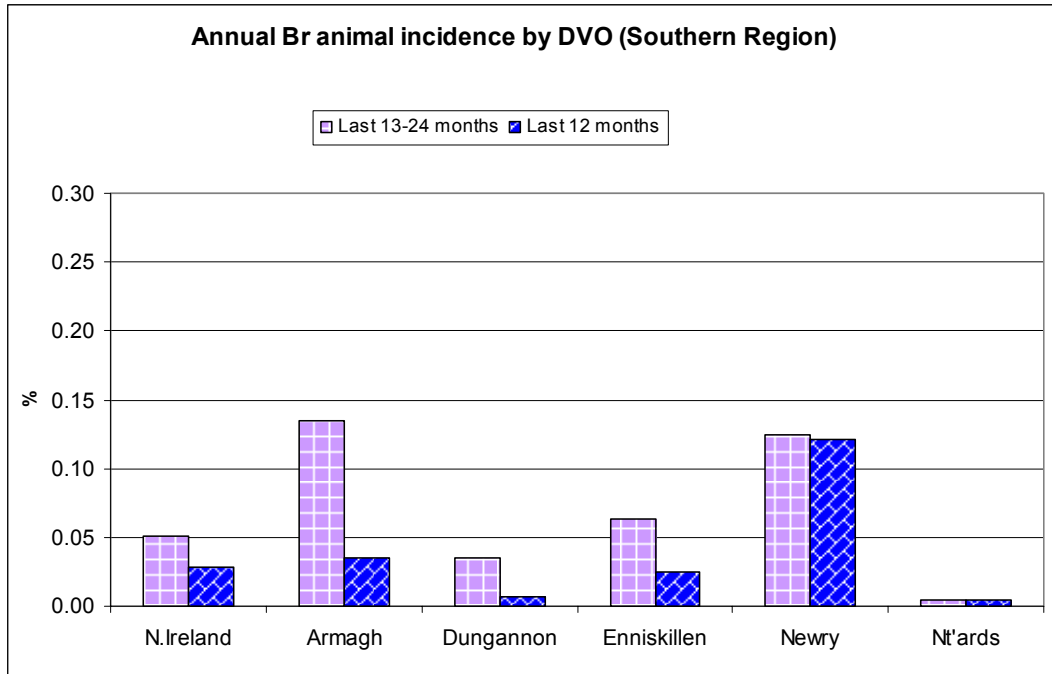
BR Herd and Animal Incidence
(12 month moving average: January 2002 to March 2009)



The annual herd incidence fell in nine of the ten DVOs. Current annual herd incidence is 0.60% compared with 1.01% in the previous 13-24 month period. One DVO (Newry) has a herd incidence of over 1% (1.87%).



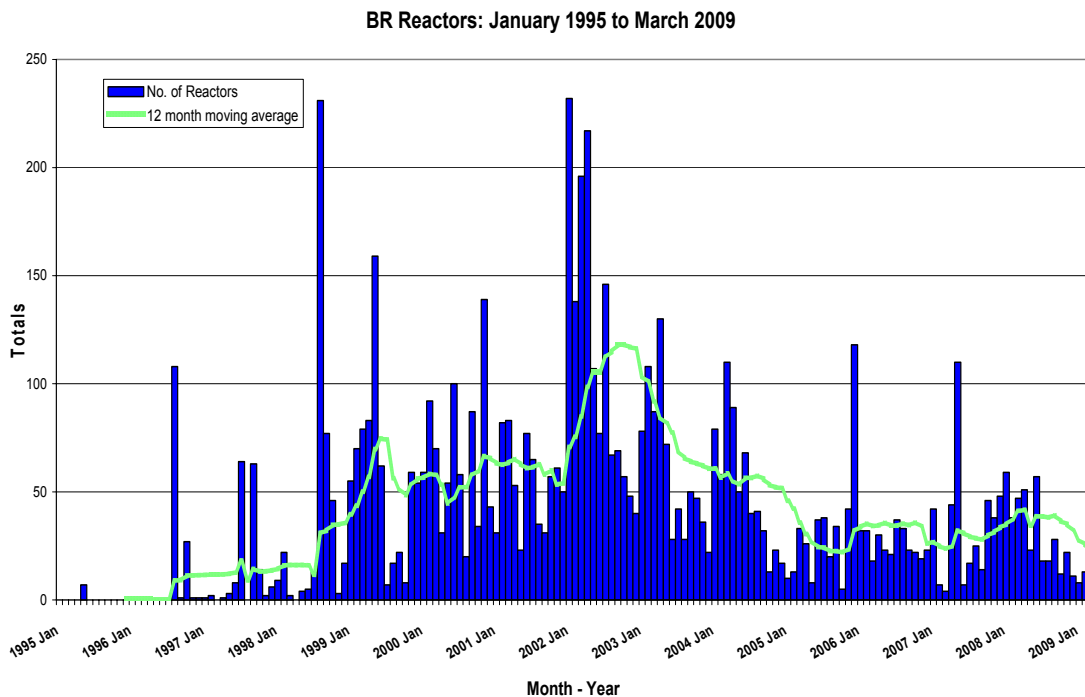
There was a fall in annual animal incidence within seven of the ten DVOs. Current annual animal incidence is running at 0.029% which is lower than the rate observed in the previous 13-24 month period (0.051%). Newry (0.121%) has contributed the majority of the reactors (55%).



1.2 Reactor animals

There was a fall (63%) in the number of reactors and negative in contact animals during this quarter compared to the same quarter last year (757 cf. 2,073) with the number of BR reactors decreasing by 72% (40 cf. 144). The 12-month rolling average number of brucellosis reactors is currently 23 per month (cf. 41 brucellosis reactors in March 2008).

	No. reactors	No. NICs	Total
Current quarter	40	717	757
Matched quarter in previous year	144	1929	2073
% change	-72.2	-62.8	-63.5



1.3 Reactor removal times

The median for reactor removal time was 14.4 working days for 2008 (cf. 12.3 days for 2007) with 272 of the 371 BR reactors (73%) being removed within 15 working days (cf. 74% in 2007).

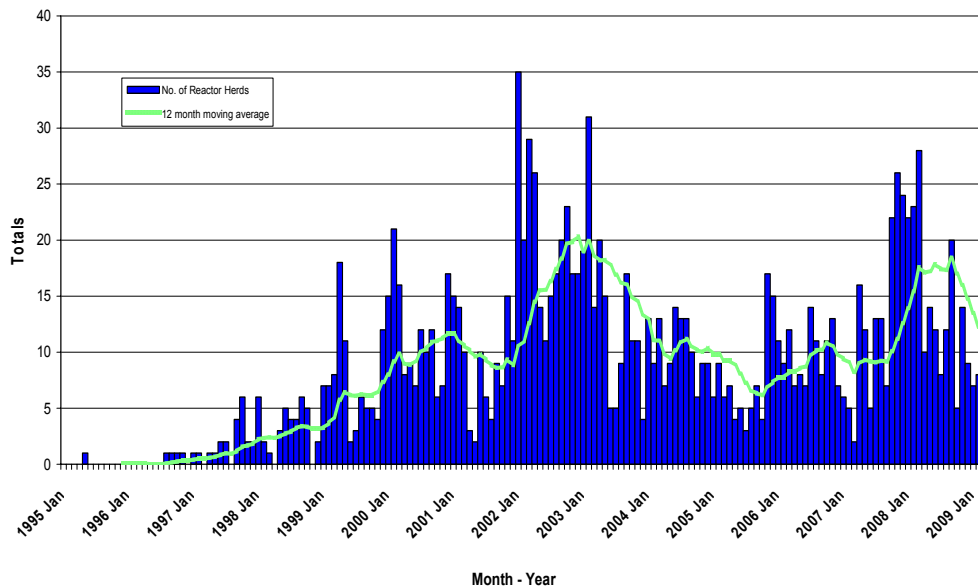
YEAR	Median	Lower Quartile	Upper Quartile
2008 [^]	14.4	10.3	15.8
2007	12.3	10.3	15.8
2006	12.3	10.3	15.1
2005	14.4	11.6	19.9
2004	14.4	11.0	19.2

1.4 New herd breakdowns

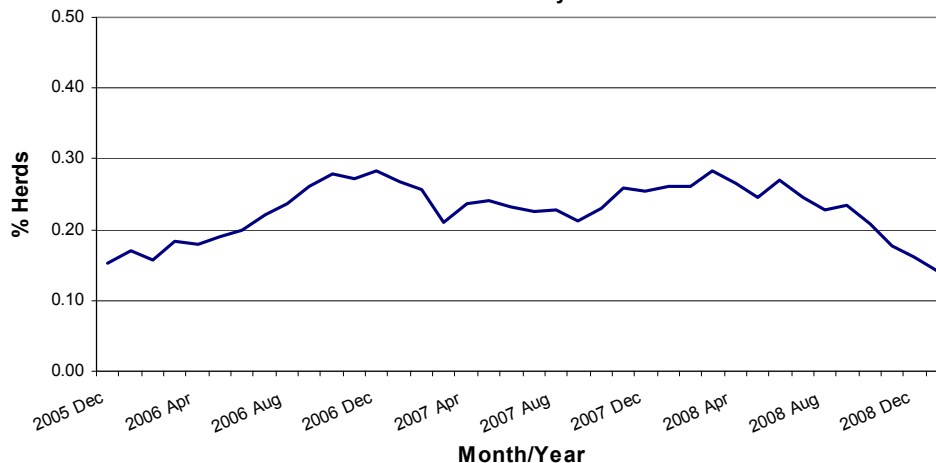
There was a decrease (71%) in the number of new herd breakdowns due to brucellosis during this quarter compared to the same quarter in 2008 (21 cf. 73). The 12-month moving average is currently 10 new breakdown herds per month (cf. 18 breakdown herds in March 2008). The culture confirmation rate for new herd breakdowns was low at 23% for 2008 (cf. 37% during 2007 and 54% during 2006). Moreover, the annual herd incidence where infection has been confirmed by culture has shown a steady reduction since June 2008 (0.27% to 0.14% in January 2009).

	No. new herd breakdowns
Current quarter	21
Matched quarter in previous year	73
% change	-71.2

New BR Reactor Herds: January 1995 to March 2009



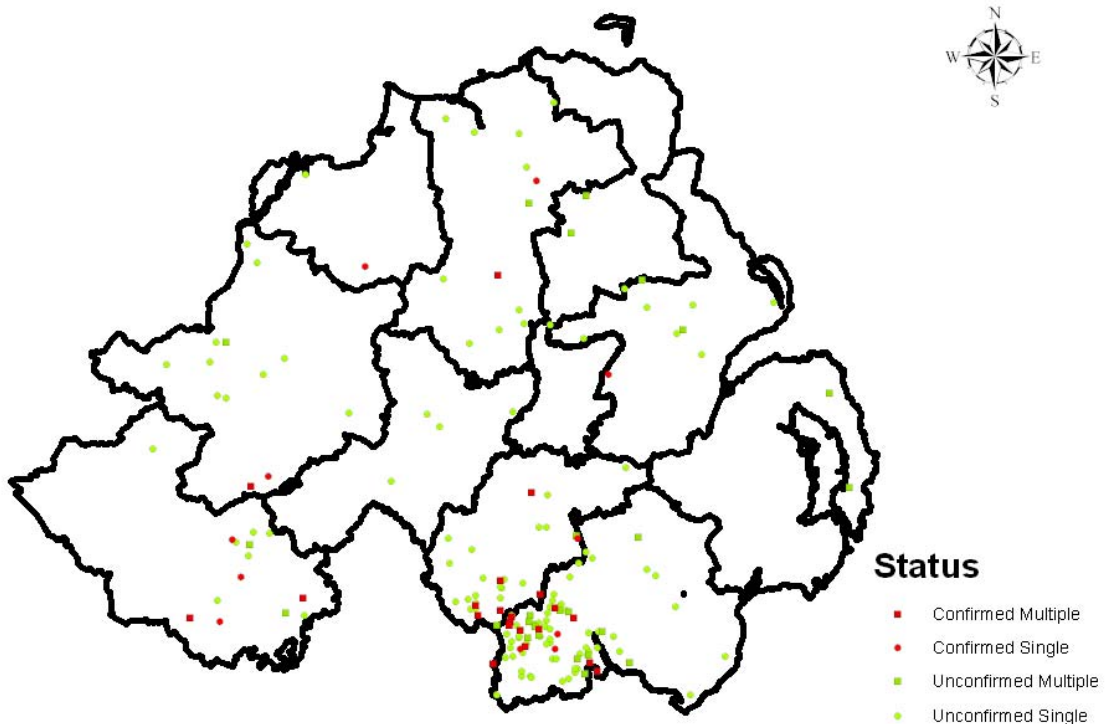
BR annual herd incidence where infection confirmed by culture: December 2005 to January 2009



1.5 BR herd breakdowns in 2008

The figure below shows the location of the new BR herd breakdowns recorded in Northern Ireland during 2008 and whether the breakdown was confirmed by culture. Multiple reactor breakdowns are also indicated as are the DVO boundaries. The figure highlights the fact that the vast majority of confirmed breakdowns occurred in the south Armagh and Newry area.

New Brucellosis Herd Breakdowns 2008

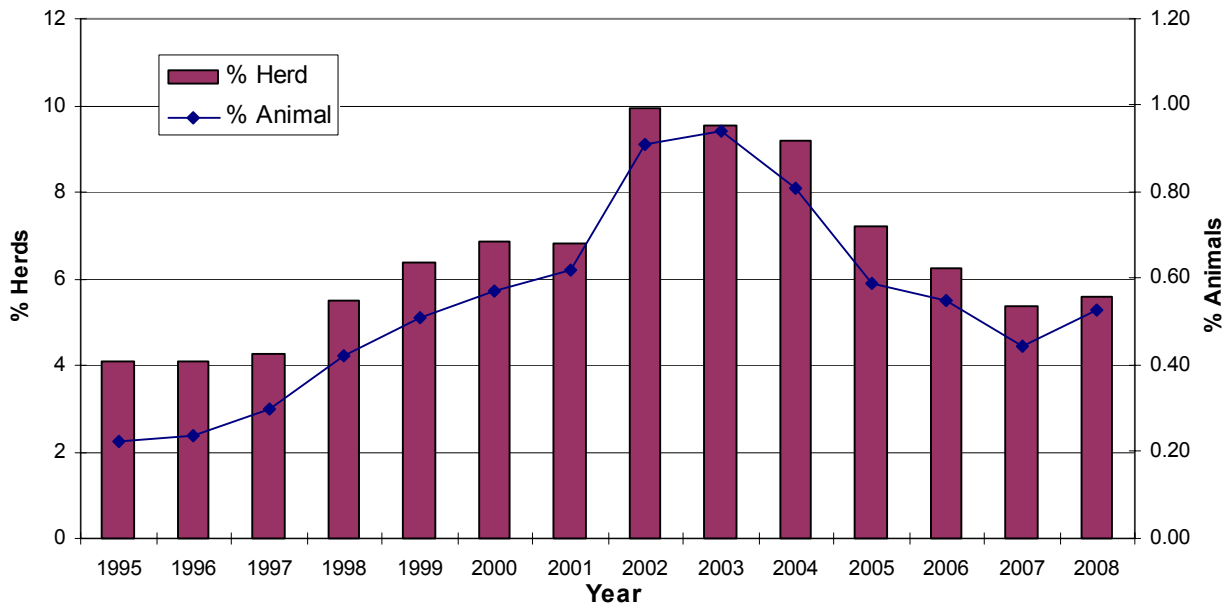


2. Bovine Tuberculosis (TB)

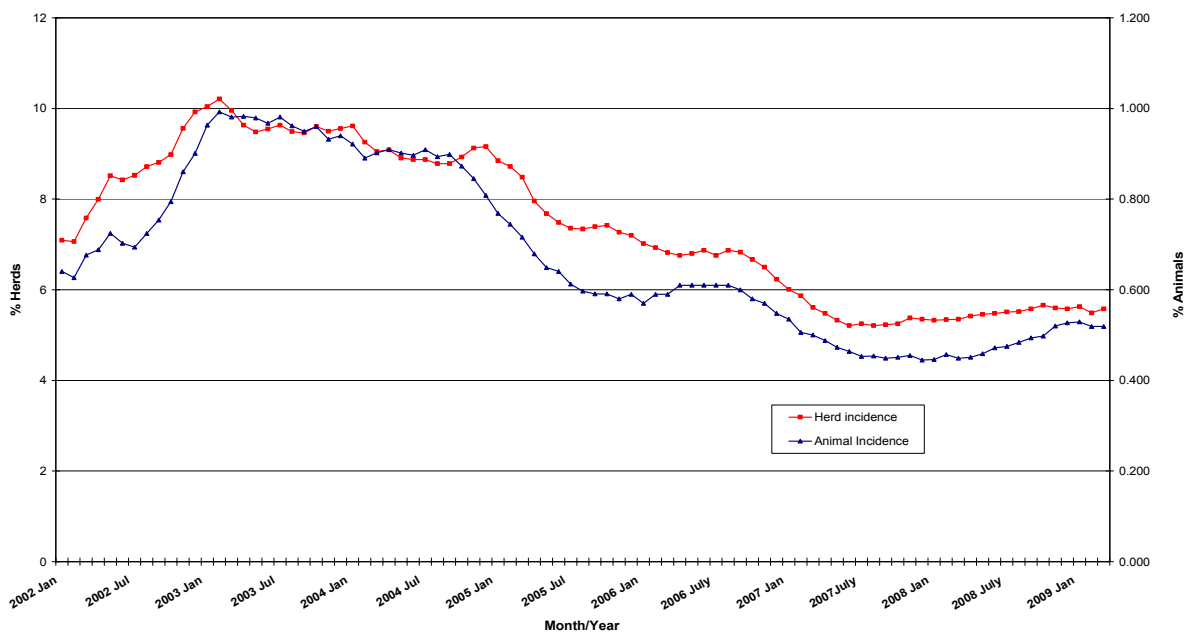
2.1 Disease trends

Approximately 23,310 herds were tuberculin tested over the last 12 months (1.62 million cattle). The herd and animal incidence of TB has shown a slight rise over the last year with the current levels running at 5.58% and 0.519%, respectively (previous 13-24 months, herd incidence = 5.35%, animal incidence = 0.448%). Peak incidence occurred during the spring of 2003 (herd incidence = 10.2%; animal incidence = 0.99%).

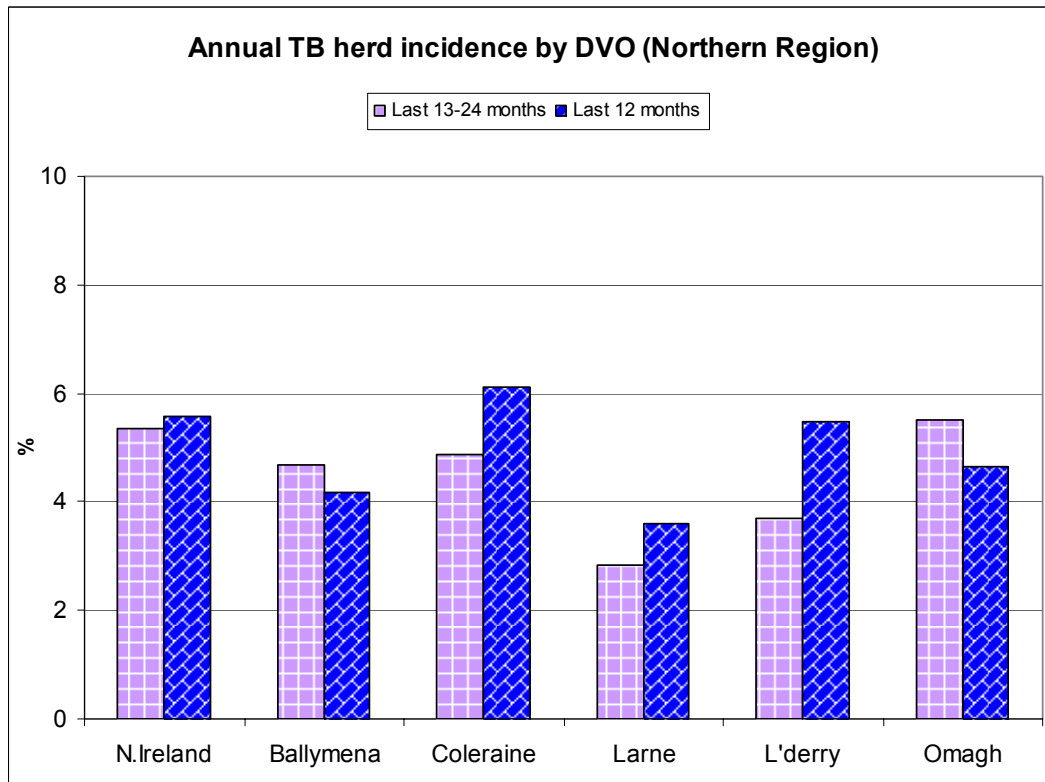
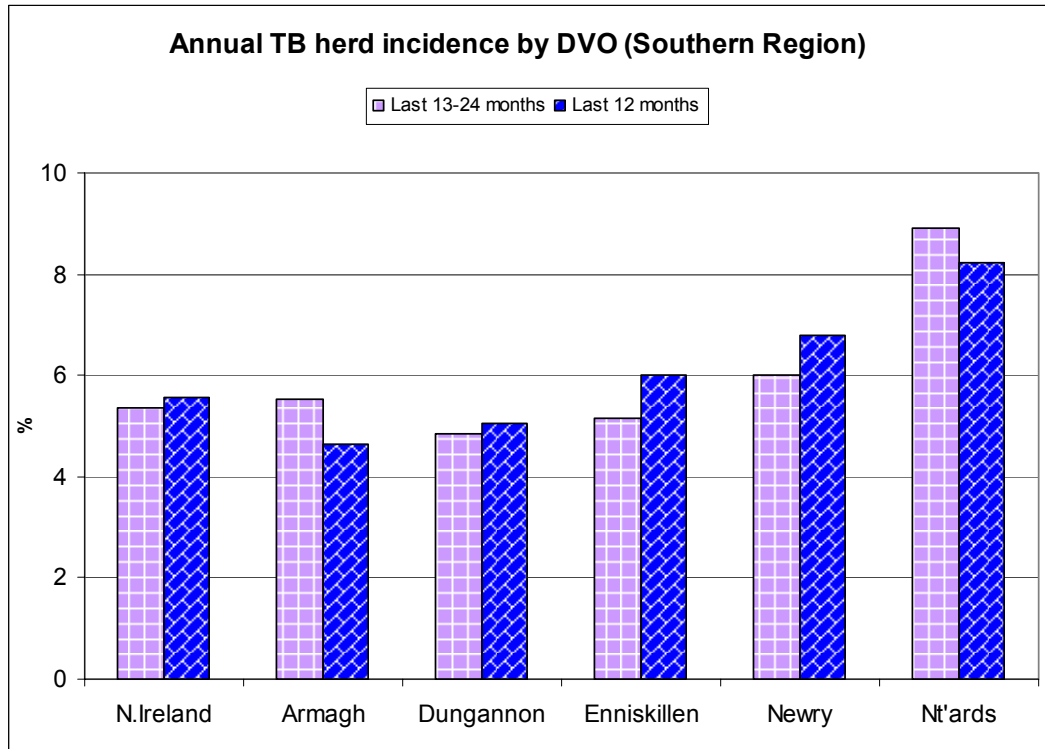
**TB herd and animal incidence:
1995 to 2008**



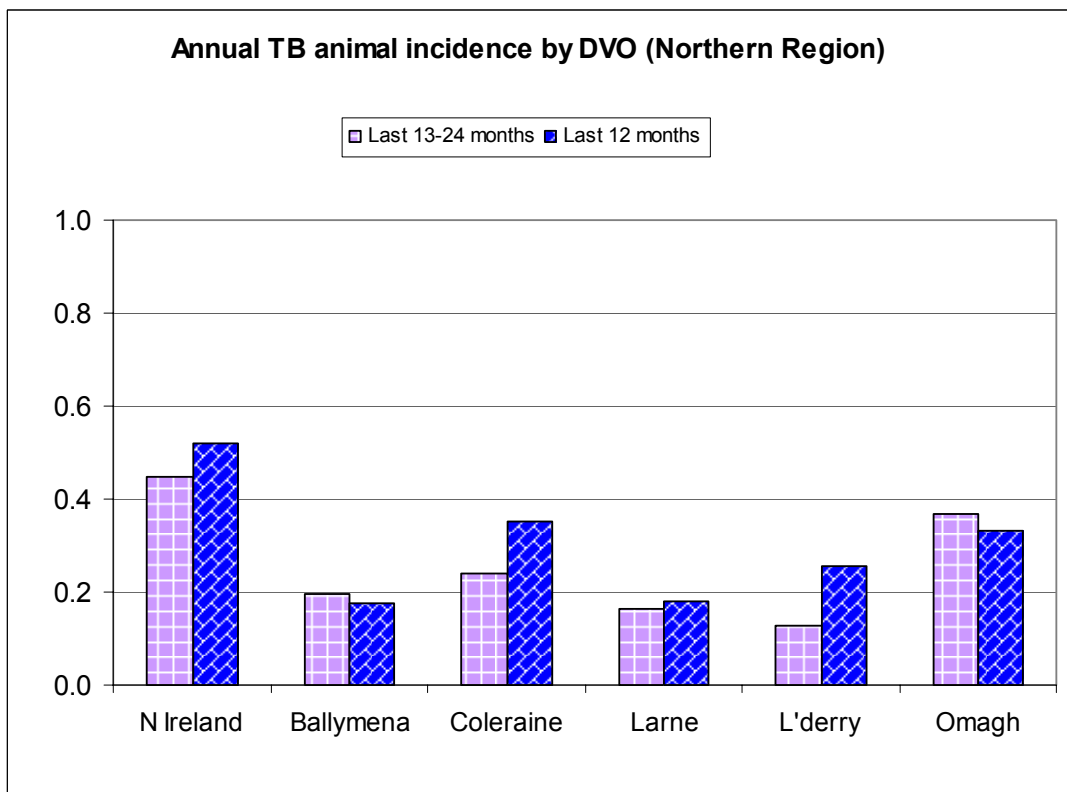
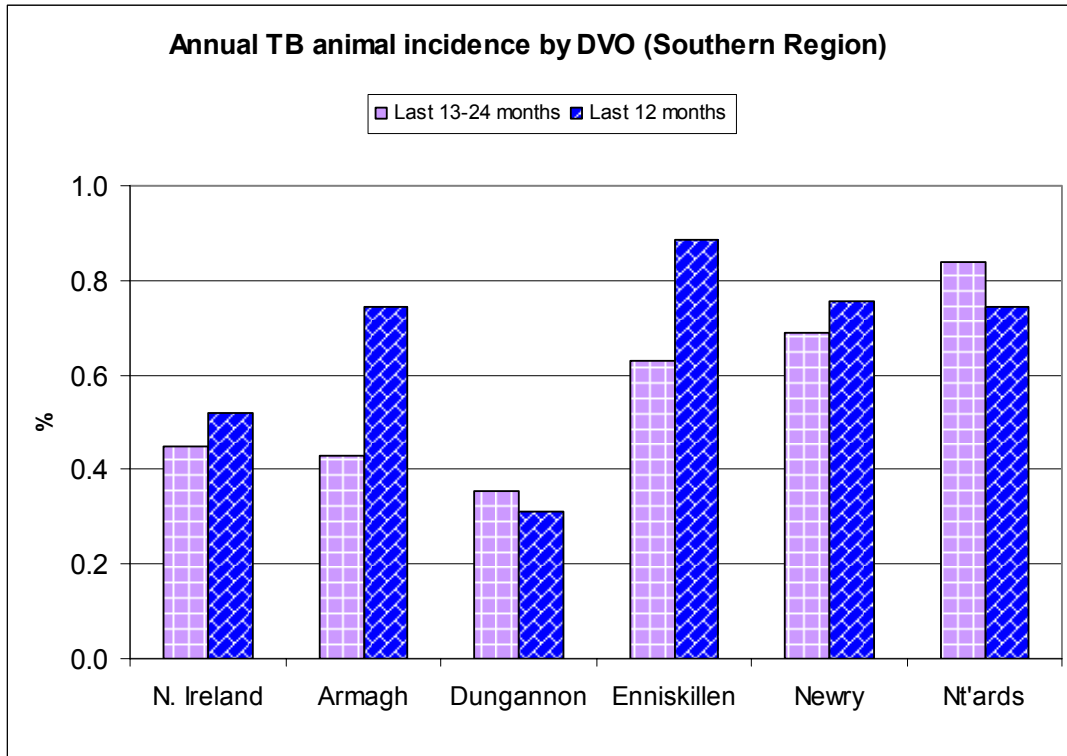
**TB Herd and Animal Incidence:
(12 month moving average: January 2002 to March 2009)**



Four of the ten DVOs demonstrated a decrease in the current annual herd incidence compared to the previous 13-24 months. Newtownards DVO had the highest herd incidence (8.21%) with the national herd incidence currently running at 5.58% (cf. 5.35% in last 13-24 months). Lowest herd incidence was observed in Larne DVO (3.59%).



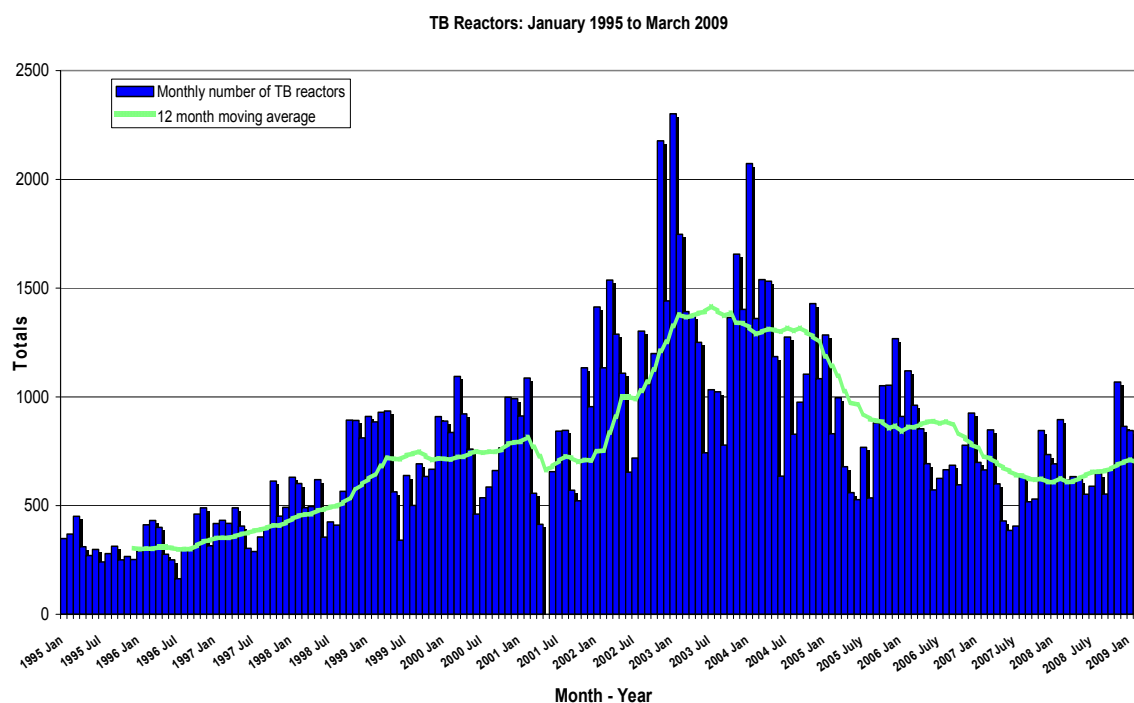
Four DVOs have shown a decrease in the annual animal incidence compared to the previous 13-24 month period. Enniskillen had the highest incidence (0.885%) while Ballymena had the lowest annual animal incidence at 0.178%. The national annual animal incidence is currently 0.519% (cf. 0.448% in last 13-24 months).



2.2 Reactor animals

During the current quarter, there has been a 1.5% increase in the number of TB reactors (2,237 TB reactors cf. 2,204 during the same period in 2008). The 12-month moving average for TB reactors is currently 702 per month (cf. 608 in March 2008).

	No. reactors	No. NICs	Total
Current quarter	2237	128	2365
Matched quarter in previous year	2204	238	2442
% change	1.5	-46.2	-3.2



2.3 Reactor removal times

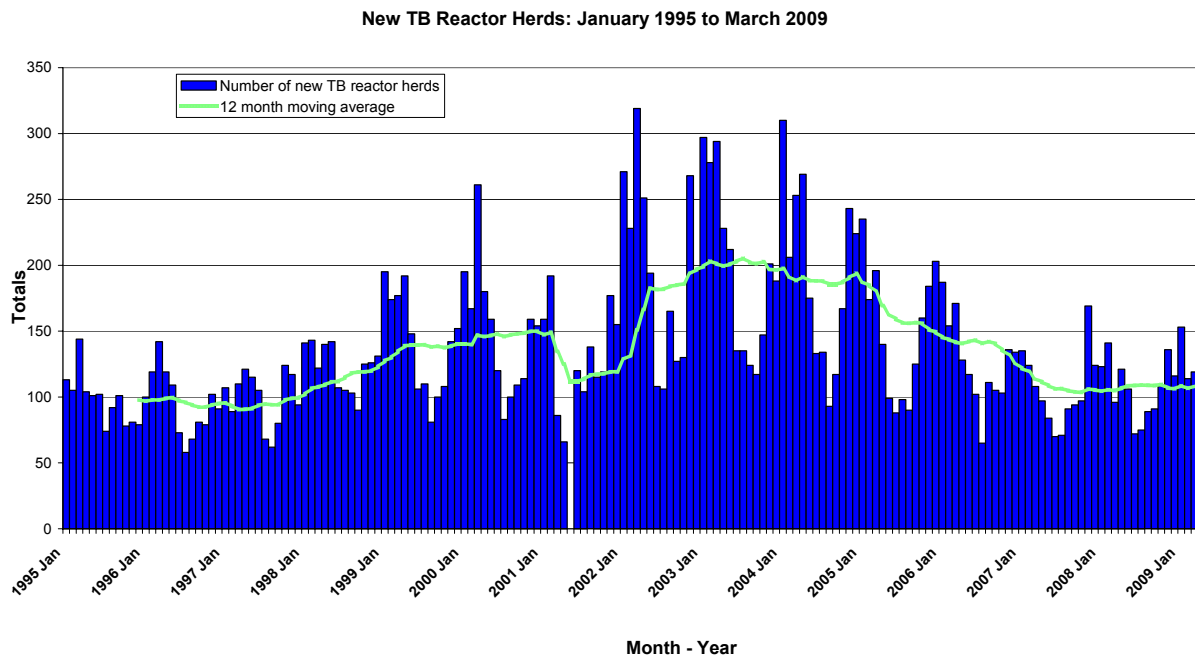
The median for reactor removal time was 11.6 working days for 2008 (cf. 12.3 days for 2007) with 7,071 of the 8,380 TB reactors (84%) being removed within 15 working days (cf. 79% in 2007).

YEAR	Median	Lower Quartile	Upper Quartile
2008^	11.6	8.2	13.7
2007	12.3	8.9	14.4
2006	13.0	9.6	17.1
2005	13.0	8.9	16.4
2004	16.4	12.3	21.9

2.4 New herd breakdowns

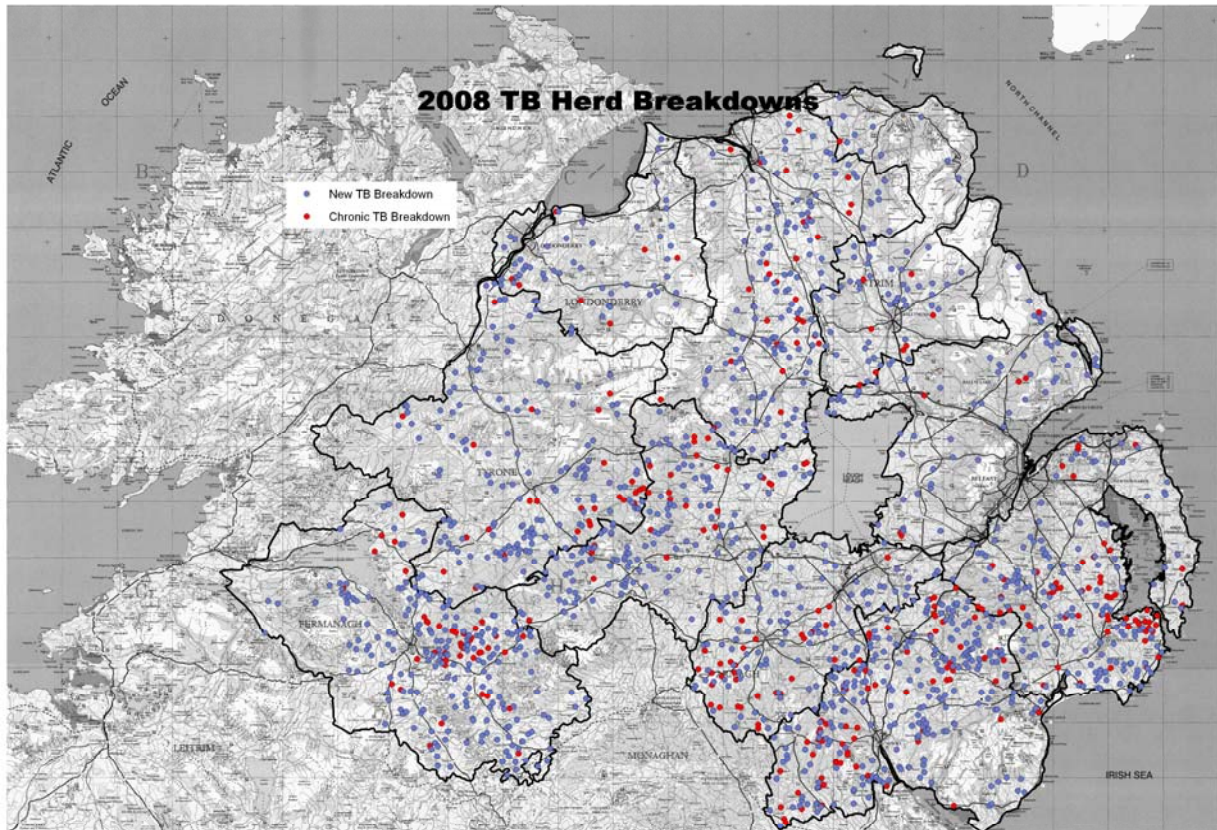
The number of new TB herd breakdowns was 7.5% higher for the current current compared to the same quarter in 2008 (387 cf. 360). The 12-month moving average for new TB herd breakdowns is currently 108 herds per month (cf. 105 in March 2008).

	No. new reactor herds
Current quarter	387
Matched quarter in previous year	360
% change	7.5



2.5 TB herd breakdowns in 2008

The figure below shows the location of TB herd breakdowns recorded during 2008. New TB herd breakdowns are herds with at least one reactor animal where the herd had no other reactor animals during the previous 12 months. Chronic herds are all other herds that have had at least one other TB reactor during 2008.



3. Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)

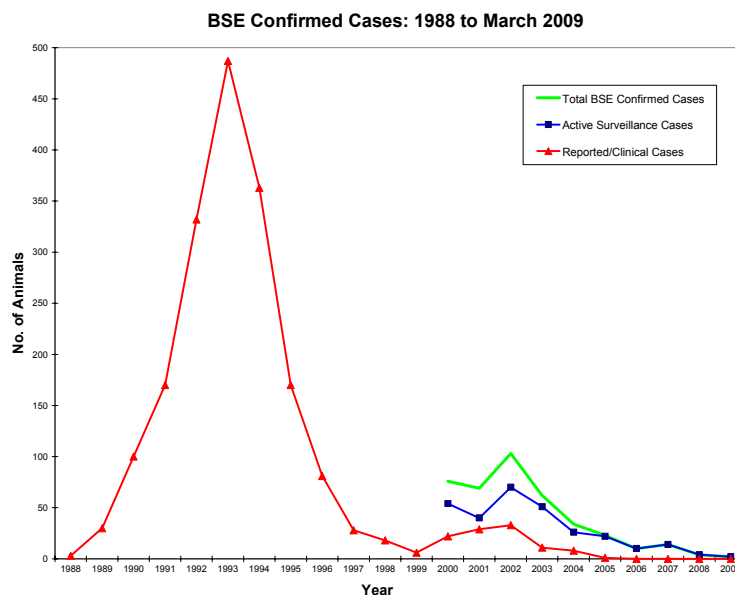
(supplied by TSE Branch)

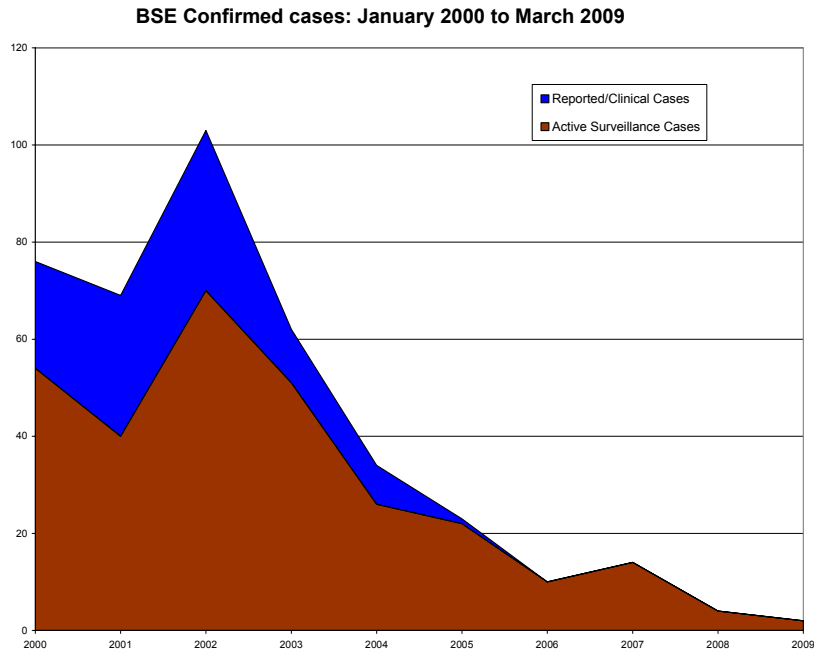
3.1 Disease trends

Since the first cases of BSE were reported in Northern Ireland during 1988, there have been a total of 2,185 cases in the province from 1,513 farms. The peak incidence year was 1993 with 487 cases. 54% of all cases occurred during the years 1992-1994, inclusive.

The proportion of clinical suspect cases that were confirmed as having BSE has steadily fallen to 6% in 2005 compared to a confirmation rate of 77% in 1995. None of the 20 suspect cases in 2006, 11 suspect cases in 2007, 10 cases in 2008 or 4 cases in 2009 have had BSE confirmed. There has also been a steady increase in the age profile of cases since 1999 with only 10% of cases in 2003 being in cattle under six years of age and only 6% confirmed in 2004. Two of the 23 cases (8.7%) confirmed in 2005 were less than six years of age. None of the 10 confirmed cases in 2006 were under six years old. However, 2 of the 14 confirmed cases in 2007 (14.3%), 1 of the 4 cases confirmed in 2008 (25%) and both of the cases confirmed in 2009 (100%) were under 6 years old. There has been an increase in the number of confirmed cases during the current quarter compared to the same quarter of 2008 (2 cf. 0).

Active surveillance of over 24 month fallen animals is now the main source of confirmed cases (100% of cases in 2009, 100% of cases in 2008, 64.3% of cases in 2007 and 70% of cases in 2006). In previous years, active surveillance through over thirty months casualty slaughter has been the main source (69% of cases in 2003; 62% of cases during 2004; 65% of cases in 2005). This shift is due to the changes in the criteria required for a casualty animal to be accepted into the Older Cattle Disposal Scheme.





3.2 Cases by category

Confirmed cases of BSE: 2003 – 2009

Type	Category	2004 Cases	2005 Cases	2006 Cases	2007 Cases	2008 Cases	2009 Cases (Jan-Mar)
Passive Surveillance	On farm suspects	8	1	0	0	0	0
	Abattoir suspects	0	0	0	0	0	0
Active Surveillance	Fallen animals	1	5	7	9	4	2
	Cohorts of BSE Cases	0	2	0	0	0	0
	Over 48 months ante-mortem failure animals	-	-	-	-	-	0
	Over 48 months human consumption	-	-	-	-	-	0
	OTM Casualty animals	21	15	3	3	0	-
	OTM Random animals	1	0	0	-	-	-
	OTM Ante-Mortem failure animals	2	0	0	1	0	-
	Over 42/30 months survey (including 1996/97 cohort)	1	0	0	-	-	-
	OTM Human Consumption	0	0	0	1	0	-
	Total		34	23	10	14	4

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Animal incidence	Number of reactors divided by the number of animals tested over a specified period of time expressed as a percentage (i.e. one animal with multiple tests is only counted once)
BR	Bovine brucellosis
BSE	Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
Coverage	Number of tests completed during the quarter divided by the number of due tests expressed as a percentage
Herd incidence	Number of new herd breakdowns divided by the number of herds with a herd level test over a specified period of time expressed as a percentage (i.e. one herd with multiple tests is only counted once)
Lower quartile	The value of the observation which splits the number of observations into a $\frac{1}{4}$ part and a $\frac{3}{4}$ part when they are ranked in order of value e.g. if there were 99 observations then the value of the 25 th observation equals the lower quartile
Median	The value of the observation which splits the number of observations into two equal parts when they are ranked in order of value e.g. if there were 99 observations then the value of the 50 th observation equals the median
New herd breakdown	A herd with at least one reactor animal where the herd had no other reactor animals during the previous 12 months. NB – within TB, herds with confirmed TB from lesions found at routine slaughter are not currently included.
OTM	Over thirty months disposal scheme
PVPs	Private Veterinary Practitioners
Reactor removal times	Number of working days between the test revealing the reactor animal and the death of that animal. Figures given are median values for working days estimated from calendar days (calendar days multiplied by 0.685).
Total tests due	Number of tests which had a test due during the quarter or which had a test due prior to the quarter that had not been completed prior to the commencement of the quarter.
TB	Bovine tuberculosis
TSE	Transmissible spongiform encephalopathy
Upper quartile	The value of the observation which splits the number of observations into a $\frac{3}{4}$ part and a $\frac{1}{4}$ part when they are ranked in order of value e.g. if there were 99 observations then the value of the 75 th observation equals the upper quartile