

Q Fever

Thirteen cases of Q fever were notified during 2008 compared to 17 in 2007 and 12 in 2006.

Nine cases occurred in males and four in females. The cases ranged in age from two to 96 years (mean age, 50 years; median age, 48 years).

Ten cases were classified as confirmed and three as probable.

The disease is commonly acquired through occupational exposure to infected sheep and other small ruminants, e.g. by farmers, veterinarians, and abattoir workers.

Over the last three years, the south of the Netherlands has been experiencing large community outbreaks of Q fever during the summer months. Some clusters have been linked with Q fever outbreaks on goat farms. Further investigations and control measures are ongoing including the introduction of mandatory vaccination of small ruminants in the region. ¹

1. Schwimmer et al, B. 2009. Sustained intensive transmission of Q fever in the South of the Netherlands, 2009. <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/images/dynamic/EE/V14N19/art19210.pdf>

Echinococcosis

In 2008, there were two notifications of echinococcosis, one male and one female. Both were adults. These are the first cases of echinococcosis notified in Ireland since the disease became notifiable in 2004.

Because of the long incubation period for this disease, it is possible that infection occurred many years ago. As no enhanced information is collected on cases of this disease in Ireland, it is not possible to conjecture if their infections were acquired in Ireland or abroad.

Table: Q fever notifications by age and sex, Ireland 2008

Age group	Male	Female	Total
<5 yr	1	0	1
5-14 yrs	0	0	0
15-24 yrs	0	1	1
25-44 yrs	2	1	3
45-64 yrs	4	2	6
65+ yrs	2	0	2
Total	9	4	13