



Guidance note on the public health investigation and reporting of human *Echinococcus* cases



Currently, the Irish Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) has secured a derogation which allows Ireland to insist that all pets travelling to this country from Europe have to be treated for tapeworms. This is based on the current low incidence of human echinococcosis in Ireland and on veterinary surveillance of wildlife in Ireland.

Since the incubation period for the disease can be many years, it is not usually possible to establish definitively how/where an infection was acquired, however, knowing if notified human cases were non-Irish born or had spent long periods of time abroad in a country endemic for echinococcosis can suggest that infection was not likely to have been acquired in Ireland, thus supporting the evidence on which the derogation is based.

In order that the needs of DAFF can be met for the maintenance of this derogation, the following is recommended:

- When a case of echinococcosis is notified, the *place of birth* and *ethnicity* of the case should be recorded (both core CIDR fields). Where the case is Irish-born but has spent extensive periods of time abroad, this should be recorded in the CIDR comments field.
- Where infection is suspected to have been acquired in Ireland, DAFF should be contacted in order that follow-up investigations can be undertaken of domestic pets and/or livestock from whom the case could have acquired their infection. DAFF will undertake investigations and where necessary, will undertake control measures, e.g. pets may need to be purged of the adult tapeworm and have their diets controlled, or offal from suspected livestock may require disposal under strict controls.