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Dear xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

## **BOVINE TB AND ORGANIC FARMING**

Further to my letter to you of 5 October 2011 and discussion with my colleague, I can confirm the position already outlined to you and provide you with some additional information.

A study of the prevalence of *Mycobacterium bovis* infection in organic livestock herds in Northern Ireland for 2007 and 2008 and case studies of seven herds in a high-prevalence area from 1990 to 2008 was conducted by Olwen M Kerr, BMV&S (Edinburgh), MRCVS. This was submitted to the Environmental Teaching Group, Scottish Agricultural College in 2009 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

This observational, retrospective study, which focused on the prevalence of TB on 48 NI organic livestock farms in 2007 and 2008, found no significant difference with that in non-organic herds within their 3 km zones and with the NI prevalence rates.



Case studies of 7 NI organic farms in a high prevalence area from 1990 to 2008, covering both their conventional and organic management eras, found no significant difference between the within-herd animal incidence rates for the 2 management eras or with the area animal incidence rates.

A farm management survey of the case study farms identified changes to management and husbandry practices between the 2 eras which were in common across the studied farms. The results from this study suggest that organic herds, in areas of high TB prevalence, will struggle to escape from the background of infection even when management and husbandry practices are employed which should enhance bio-security.

I do trust that this is helpful to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Ross', written in a cursive style.

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