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Central Meat Control Laboratory

The Central Meat Control Laboratory (CMCL), provides laboratory support to the Veterinary Public Health Inspectorate of the Department of Agriculture and Food, based at meat plants, in assuring compliance with national and international standards of food safety and hygiene.

History

The CMCL was established in Abbotstown in 1985 and was relocated to Backweston in September 2005. The Laboratory was accredited by the Irish National Accreditation Board in 2005. The details of the scope of accreditation include the following:

- Detection of β -Agonists in Urine and water
- Detection of Antibiotics by EU 6-Plate Test
- Detection and enumeration of Coliforms and E.coli in Water
- Detection and enumeration of Faecal Enterococci in Water
- Detection of Carbadox in Porcine Liver
- Detection of Zeranol substances in Urine
- Detection and quantification of Cadmium in Muscle

“ The CMCL plays a pivotal part in organising sampling programs, and carries out almost 90% of the analyses”



Current Work of Laboratory

The CMCL is the National Reference Laboratory for 7 groups of Residue tests and for Trichinella testing. There are 2 sections within the CMCL with a total of 35 staff including veterinarians, other scientists, and ancillary personnel.

The Residue Section which carries out over 12,800 tests per year on a range of Veterinary Drugs, Banned growth promoters, Heavy Metal Contaminants, and Nitrite/Nitrate additives to Bacon.

The Microbiology Section carries out Microbiological tests on 1,200 Meat, Meat Product samples and 1,200 water samples from water used in food production from all over Ireland for a range of Pathogenic and Indicator organisms. They also carry out Trichinella testing on over 4,400 pork and 80 Horse samples per year.

Other functions of the CMCL are:

- Organisation of special surveys. The Laboratory is frequently required to conduct special surveys in relation to public health. Recent special survey topics were:
 - Heavy metal contamination of beef
 - Dioxin contamination of meat
 - Antibiotic residue in poultry meat,
- Auditing private labs testing for Trichinella
- Participation in CODEX ALIMENTARIUS Commission (CCRVDF & CCMAS) and Community Reference Laboratories workshops and seminars
- Provision of Training (Regional V P H & FSAI meetings, A.O.s, VI Induction)

Future work

The National Residue Control Plan becomes more comprehensive every year, with more analytes coming under surveillance. The scope of accreditation is also being expanded year by year and it is expected that an additional 8-10 microbiological and residue tests will be included in the scope of the accreditation in 2007.

