



CRISIS

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 presented by MAIRE LALOR AND DAVE O'CONNOR
ONE DAY SEMINAR



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THE COURSE WILL COVER:
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With disinfectant procedures already in place, New Ross is in the midst of the battle against Foot and Mouth Disease. Outside the local co-op, the sense of fear is palpable as reporter Aisling Donnelly discovered.

Fearing the worst

THE MILD smell of disinfectant lingers in the air, mats and buckets are drenched in the now-familiar brown liquid, but it is the faces of those calling to the local co-op, which reveal the extent of the Foot and Mouth epidemic.

For over a week, the Glanbia co-op in Marshmeadows has been inundated with demands for disinfectant with farmers as well as concerned local people attempting to build a barrier of defences against the dreaded disease.

Besides concern for their own livelihood, those gathered outside the co-op on Friday were visibly anxious about the lasting effects an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) could have on the country, particularly in terms of the economy and employment.

Glanbia worker, Julie Power from Ballyedock, Campile is only too well aware of the dangers associated with the disease. Coming from a farming background, she had already implemented disinfectant procedures at her farm, however, she expressed concern that the Government did not act quickly enough in preventing FMD entering the country.

'I am very concerned about this. I have a farm myself and we have sheep and horses. I definitely would not like to see Foot and Mouth Disease coming in here. The situation is getting more serious by the hour,' she said.

'I think there is enough prevention now against the disease, but more should have been done earlier on when the outbreak was discovered in England. I also think everywhere should have disinfectant mats,' she added.

Duncannon resident, Patricia Sherriff was similarly concerned about the possibility of the disease spreading to Co. Wexford.

'It is very serious. I'm not from a farming background myself, but I am here buying disinfectant mats for a friend, who has sheep. I would be concerned about it spreading. I think enough is being done at the moment, but it's hard to know what's going to happen,' she said.

Ruby Chapman was 'scared' by the implications of the



Richard Barville Richard Howlin



Patricia Sherriff John Doyle



Bridie Byrne Ruby Chapman

'The situation is getting more serious by the hour'

disease hitting the county, saying people are living with fear and uncertainty. 'I am scared about the implications of this because there is a sense of not-knowing. I think there was not enough precautions taken. I think churches, schools and shops should all have disin-

fectant mats in place. If the disease does arrive here, it will affect everyone. There will be so many people out of work,' the Duncannon woman emphasised.

As a livestock farmer, Ballysop native Richard Howlin expressed his obvious concern at the implications of the disease reaching Southern Ireland.

'I would be very afraid that it's already here. The Department of Agriculture did act fairly quick, but it is mostly livestock hauliers and lorry men who should have taken earlier precautions. This will be a very serious thing if it comes into the country,' he said anxiously.

Cattle farmer John Doyle from The Rower shared similar concerns about the future of Irish agriculture.

'I am scared about this. The danger is that there will be no market for cattle if the disease break out here. At the moment, it is hard to know if it will arrive, but I think it will be difficult to keep it out of the country. No one thought it would break out as quickly.'

The question of whether enough preventative and curtailment measures were undertaken in the UK was raised by concerned Charleton Hill resident, Bridie Byrne.

'This is a very serious situation. The country could be devastated if we get the disease. The fact is, it will affect everybody in terms of jobs, schools and even food shortages.'

'I think enough was done in Ireland to stop it getting here, but I don't know whether the same could be said of England,' she pointed out.

Meanwhile, Glanbia storeman, Richard Barville from Garryduff, Campile described how the co-op has been inundated with requests for disinfectants and specially sanitised mats.

'They are selling like hot buns, literally flying out the door - we just can't keep enough of them. People are very worried,' he stressed.