

**Discussion at the EFSA
Advisory Forum,
Ljubljana, Slovenia**

Dioxin contamination of foods

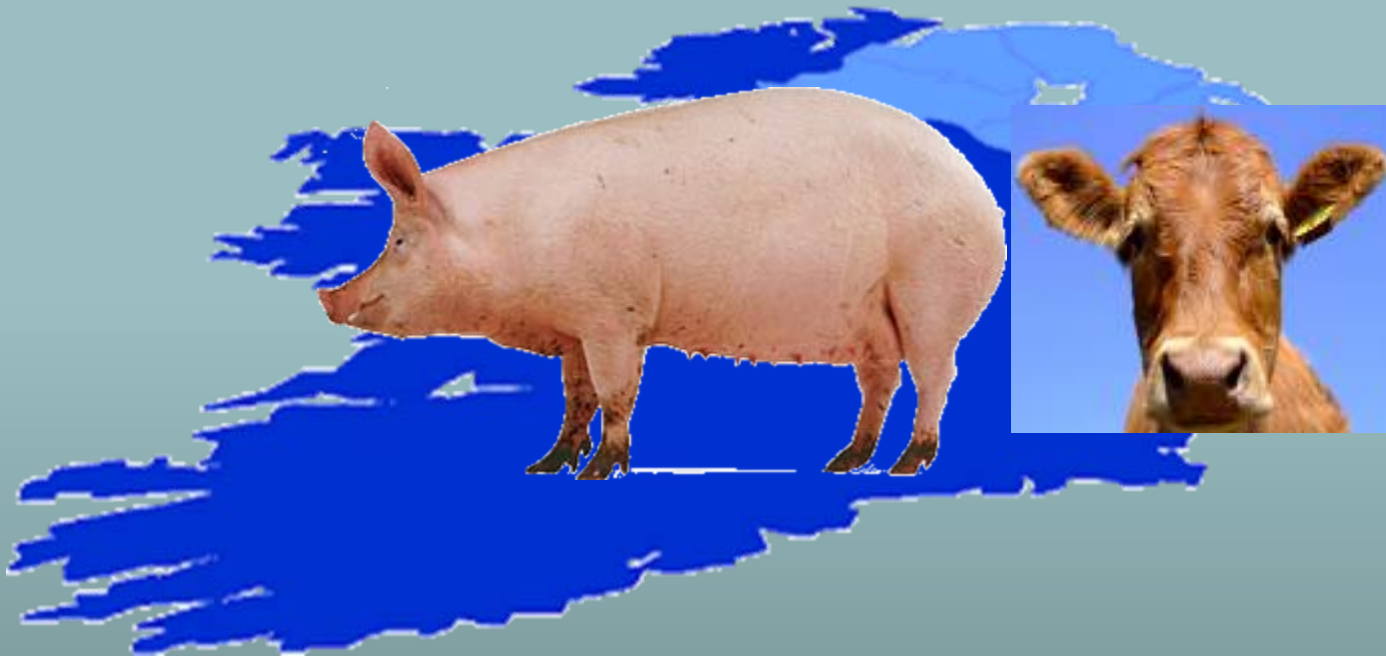
18-19 February 2009

Alan Reilly

Advisory Forum Member , Ireland



What's this incident all about?



**PCB/Dioxin Contaminated Irish
Pork and Beef**



How Did We Find It?

Pesticide Control Service, DAFF



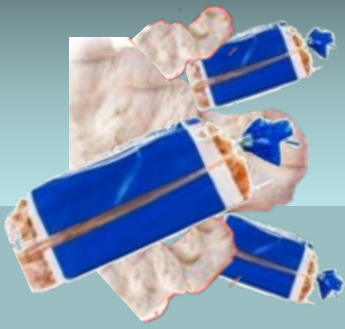
National Residues Monitoring Programme



Dioxins in Feed and Pork Fat

- **Animal feed:** E.U. Limit Feed **0.75pg/g**
- **Levels detected in Feed:** **5200pg/g**
- **Pig Fat:** E.U. Legal Limit **1pg/g**
- **Levels detected:** **80 – 200 pg/g**

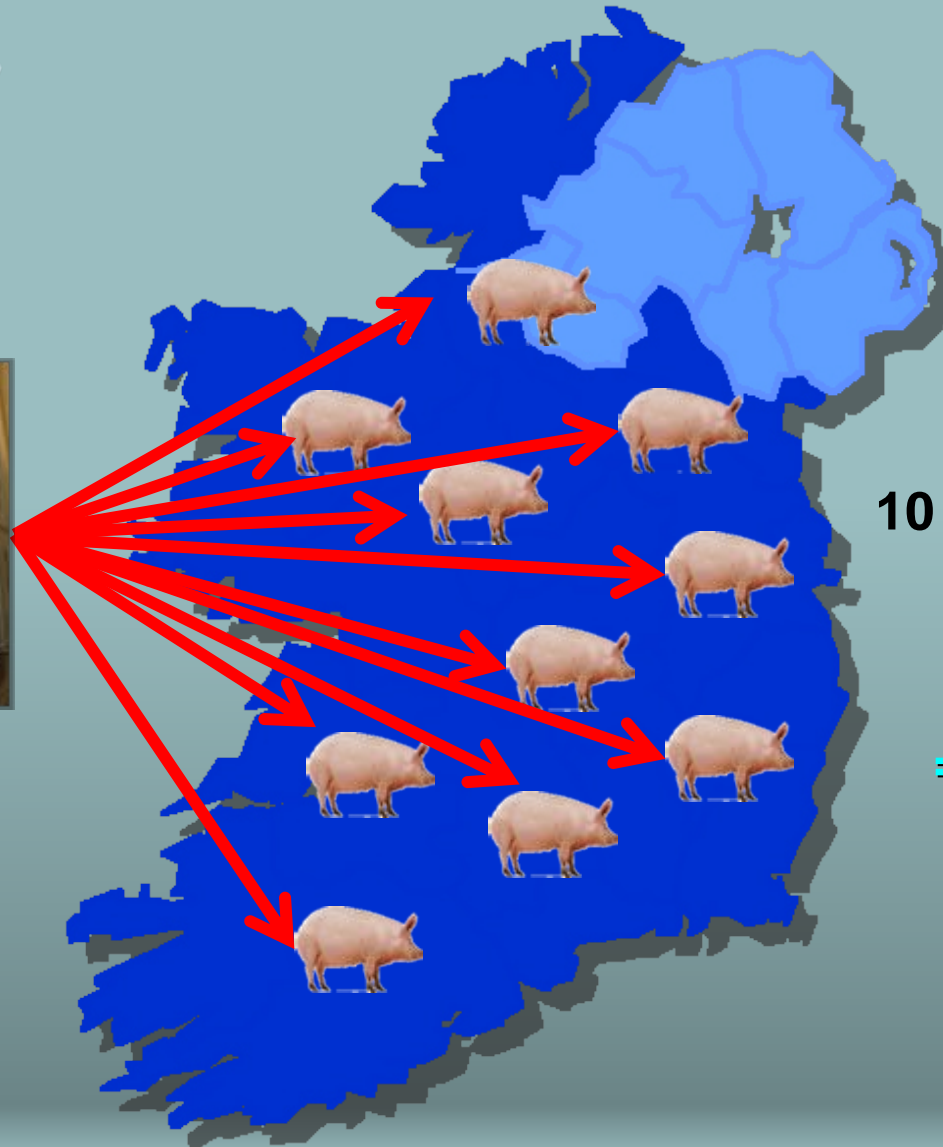




Source of Contamination



One Recycling Plant



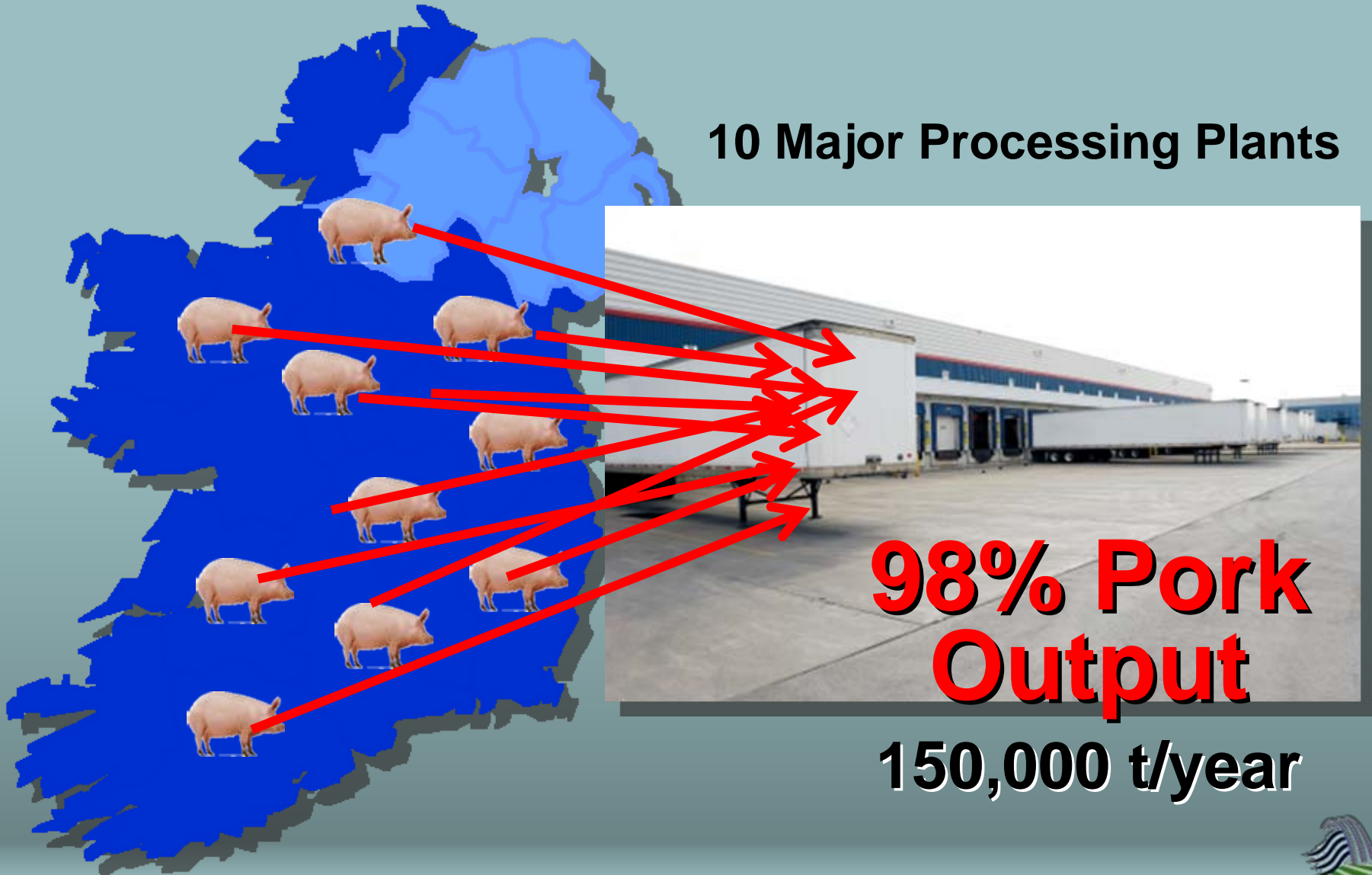
10 Pig Production
Farms

= 8% National
Pork Output



98% of National Output

10 Major Processing Plants



Outcome



Timeline of Dioxin incident

- **19/11/08 – Routine** pig fat sample taken under the National Residues Programme for screening at the National Pesticides Laboratory
- **1/12/08 - Sample confirmed positive for non-Dioxin like marker **PCB's****



Timeline (2)

1/12/08

- Preliminary movement restrictions imposed **on farm**
- One feed ingredient sample (crumb) indicative marker-PCB finding



Timeline (3)

4/12/08 (Initial Press Statement)

- 7 pig producers (feed manufacturer's client list) placed under movement restriction
- 38 cattle farms (feed manufacturer's client list) put on formal notification imposing movement restrictions on cattle farms
- 6 pig samples from manufacturer's units (slaughtered on 3/12/08) positive on screening test for NDL-PCB's



Timeline (4)

5/12/08

- Netherlands VWA phone contact with FSAI
- Dioxin investigation under way in Netherlands into reports of dioxins in pork
- References in discussions to Belgian rendering plant dioxin findings from mid-September/French pork loin sample



Timeline (5)

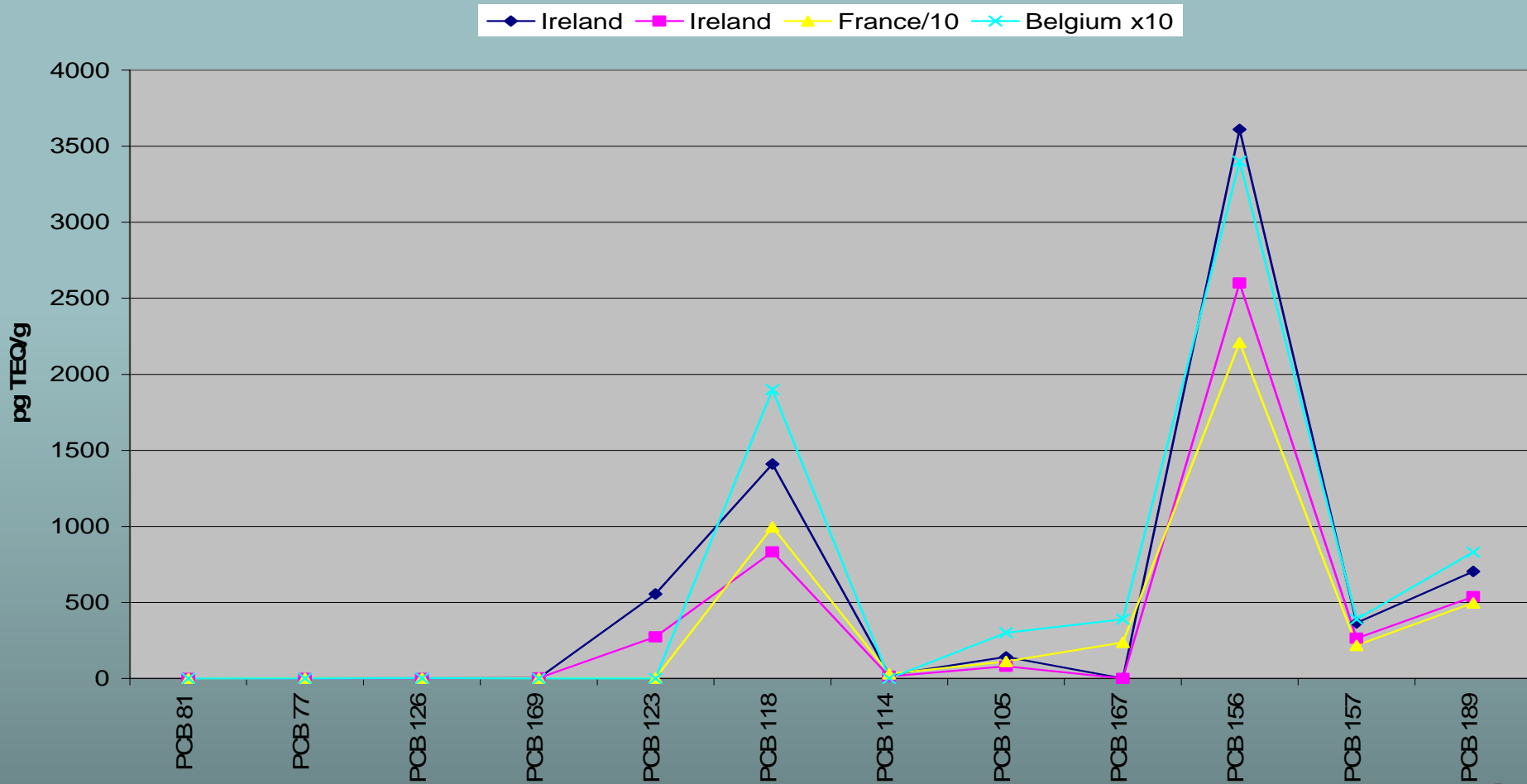
6/12/08 (RECALL)

- Discussions with **European Commission**
- Confirmation pig fat samples showed Dioxin levels ranging from 80 – 200pg/g
- One initial crumb sample showed higher levels (> 2000pg/g)



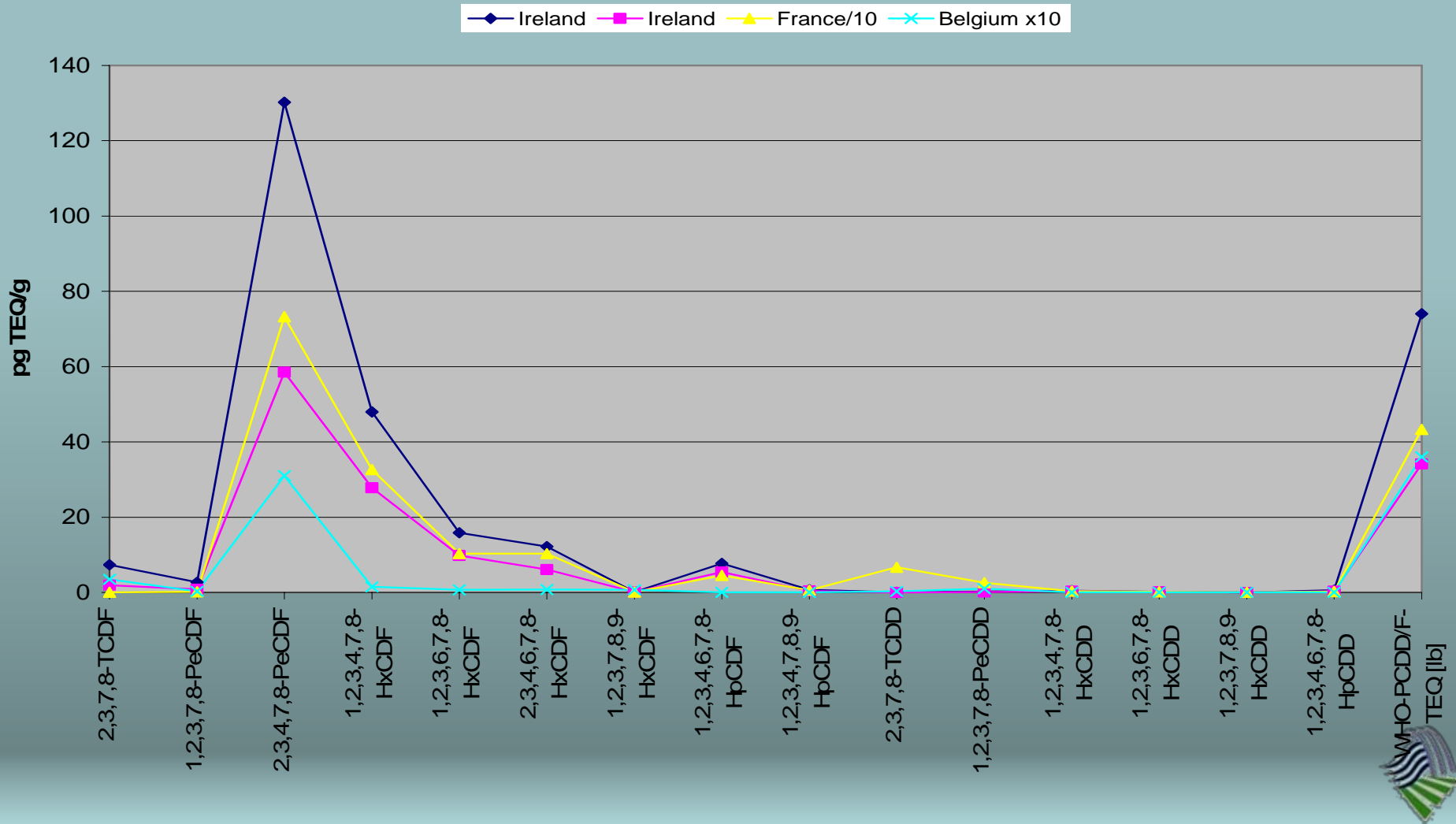
Comparison of PCB profiles detected in France, Belgium and Ireland (VWA)

PCB-DL - comparison profiles



Comparison of Dioxin profiles detected in France, Belgium and Ireland (VWA)

Dioxins - comparison



Why September 1st ?

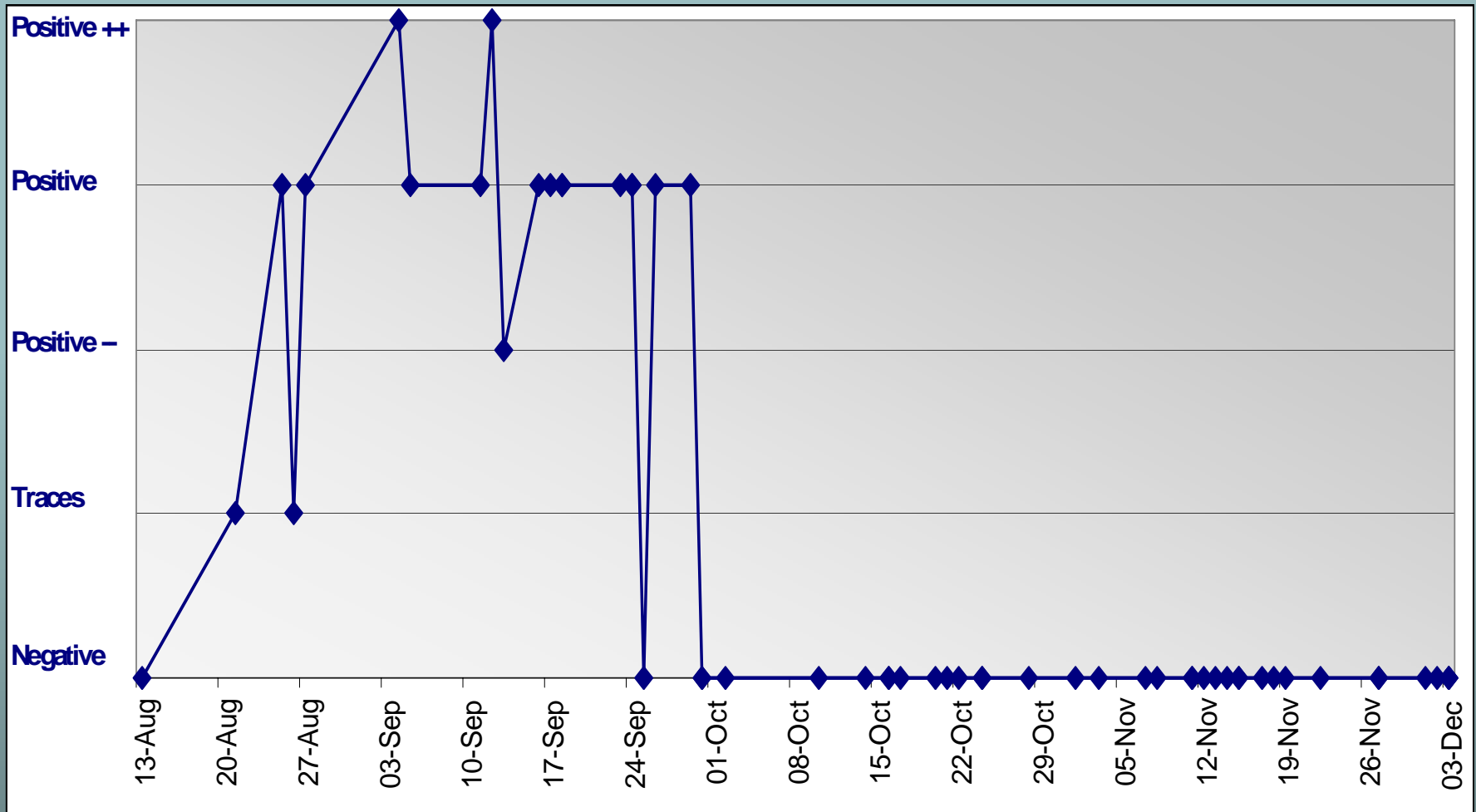
Congeners of dioxins like:

2,4,6,7,-TCDF and 1,2,3,7,8 –PeCDF

Suggest Contamination Recent

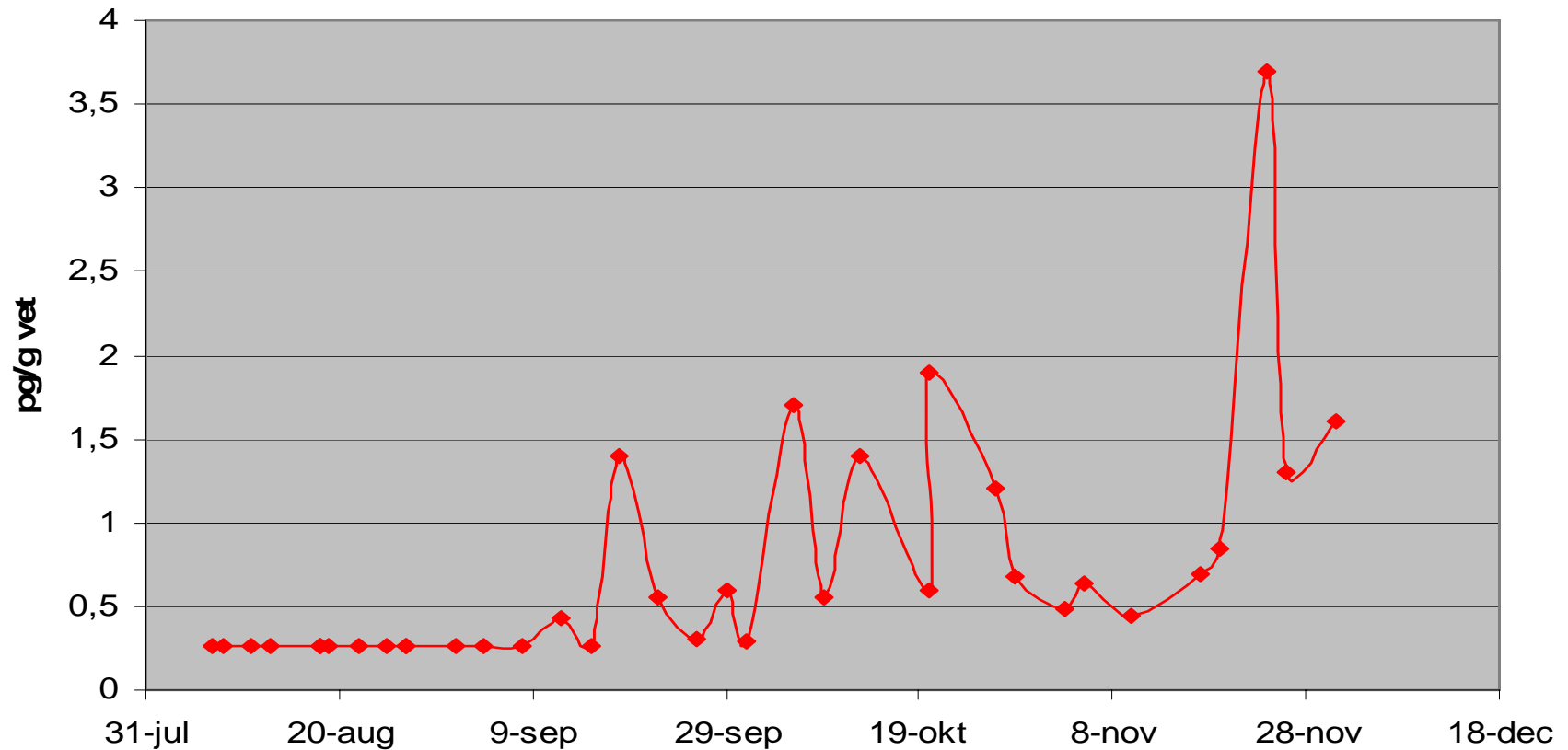


Feed Results from 13 Aug – 3 Dec



Dioxin levels at rendering plant in time

dioxine in tijd



Questions to answer?

**Was It ALL
an
OVERREACTION?**



The Belgians Had A Dioxin Crisis...

Same as Ireland;

One Single Supplier...



All Over The World...

They Banned Butter

They Banned ALL Dairy Products

They Banned Chicken

They Banned Pork

They Even BANNED Belgian Chocolate!

They Banned ALL Products Containing
any of the above



There Were Repercussions...



Two Government Ministers Resign...



Impact of Belgian Dioxin Crisis

- 1. Total Devastation of Food Industry for Six Months**
- 2. Changes in EU Regulations**
- 3. EFSA established**
- 4. Food Safety Agencies set up across EU**



The Irish Toxin Crisis 2008

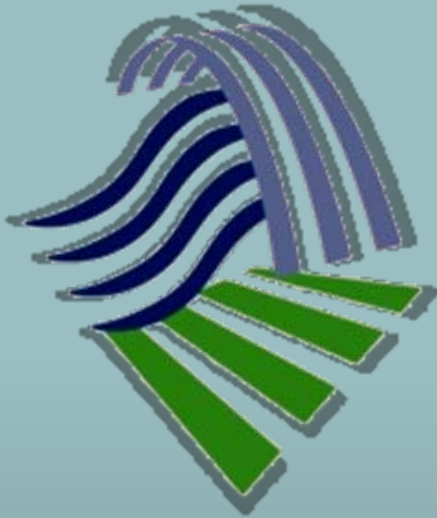


All Facts and Options Discussed...

- European food safety culture different
- Obligations to protect consumers' health
- Risk assessment = no major health risk
- Unanimous Decision Taken**
- Economic impact discussed
- Highest level of Government involved



It's About Food Safety...



Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment

Same Result



Risk communication...

BBC [Low graphics](#) [Help](#)

NEWS **LIVE BBC NEWS CHANNEL**

News Front Page 
[Africa](#)
[Americas](#)
[Asia-Pacific](#)
[Europe](#)
[Middle East](#)
[South Asia](#)
[UK](#)
[England](#)
[Northern Ireland](#)
[Scotland](#)
[Wales](#)
[UK Politics](#)
[Education](#)
[Magazine](#)
[Business](#)
[Health](#)

Page last updated at 16:00 GMT, Thursday, 11 December 2008
[Email this to a friend](#) [Printable version](#)

Honesty best policy for food industry

By Martin Cassidy
BBC NI Consumer Affairs Correspondent

Could it be that the dioxin scare is over?

It certainly looks that way. What a lot has happened since the story first broke last Saturday.

Recalling all Irish pork was a huge decision for the authorities south of the border. For Agriculture Minister Brendan Smith it must have seemed like having to order a nuclear attack on the very industry he is trying to promote.



The scare has shown the Irish food industry is real about food safety



International Press quotes...

“the Irish food industry is real about food safety”

“We tell our children that telling the truth is the best policy”

“the Irish proved to have the science and the forensic systems to deal with the issue”

“The whole point is that consumers can now see that the authorities have a way of investigating the full extent of a contamination incident”



The Outcome...

**Ham for
Christmas??**

**We're Back In
Business in
6 DAYS!**



Different approach for Beef?



38 Beef Farms Involved



Withdrawal of Beef?

- 99.98% of national beef production free of contamination
- Traceability in beef production works
- Carcasses and prime cuts withdrawn from market
- FSAI risk assessment: additional body burden calculated to be 0.035% or 300 times less than that of contaminated pork



The Reality...



**We're still in
BUSINESS...**



Let's Be Clear...working together

➤ Networking through EFSA AF

➤ EFSA rapid risk assessment

➤ Support from European Colleges

**Our Protection Of
Consumers WORKED**

➤ Risk communications worked

➤ Food safety controls worked



Proposed research work

- Dioxin transfer to piglets
- Monitor dioxin in growing piglets
- Beef cattle and changes in dioxin levels
- Methods development
- Slurry and risks to food chain?



**THANK
you!**

