



12th February 2021

Deputy Holly Cairns
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 5241/21 “To ask the Minister for Health the number of reported Covid-19 cases found in meat plant workers between 1 January 2020 and 26 January 2021, inclusive; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cairns,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

I wish to advise that from 1st January 2020 to 26th January 2021 a total of 1,772 cases were detected in meat plant facilities. This is a positivity rate of 1.09%. Please note this includes both outbreak testing and serial testing.

The Serial Testing programme at meat and food processing plants commenced on 21st August 2020 following the recommendation by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHEET). This Serial Testing is operating nationally within an agreed schedule which is once every four-week and is informed with guidance from the HSE Public Health. We are testing approximately 85 meat and food processing facilities nationwide. Serial testing is now established as a core component of the overall testing and contact tracing service.

Where an outbreak occurs in a meat or food processing facility then outbreak mass testing will still occur. Public Health will be in touch locally in those situations. If a plant has confirmed cases, there is a Public Health Assessment which determines what interventions are required and the subsequent frequency of testing. In all cases where an individual receives a detected result, the contact tracing process begins.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Niamh O'Beirne
National Lead Testing and Tracing

