

8th March 2021

Deputy Joan Collins
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 10961/21 “To ask the Minister for Health the number of meat plants that have had full Covid-19 testing from 4 January 2021 to 19 February 2021.”

Dear Deputy Collins,

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 4th January 2021 to 19th February 2021 a total of 85 meat plant facilities had full Covid-19 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 (NPHE). This Serial Testing is operating nationally within an agreed schedule which is once every four-weeks and is informed with guidance from the HSE Public Health.

Serial testing is now established as a core component of the overall testing and contact tracing service. To date we have completed 133,367 tests in the Meat and Food Processing Plants Serial Testing programme with an overall positivity rate of 0.85%.

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