

Thompson says study didn't use some important tissue samples

By PATRICIA FEEHILY

WHAT happened to samples taken years ago from dead and dying animals in the Askeaton area?, IFA animal health chairman for Limerick, David Thompson asked this week.

Mr Thompson is disappointed that the samples were not used in the £4 million Askeaton health investigation.

"We were told that these samples were stored in freezers in Limerick and Abbotstown, and that they weren't used because investigators didn't know what they were looking for. But could it be that they were no longer fit for scientific work because they might have decayed?" he asked.

"I was with some of those dying animals," he said. "Some had massive abscesses, caused by weather according to the investigators. As an animal nutritionist visiting farms where problems existed for over 30 years, I never saw anything like this and I hope I never will again."



David Thompson

"The then Minister for Agriculture," he went on, "gave instructions that samples from the animals should be kept for investigation. Surely for £4 million, somebody would know what to look for in them.

Why, for instance wasn't the Equine Centre's hypotheses not followed up?"

Mr Thompson said that the report gave no explanation for the hundreds of cattle "dying in great pain" and 91 horses lost on

one farm alone.

"There was no explanation for metal and even bedroom curtain rails rotting with very rapid rust, and herbage withering away in the fields."

Mr Thompson said that he estimated that over one million tonnes of coal, over three million tonnes of bauxite, over a million tonnes of alumina and over 100,000 tonnes of caustic soda (NaOH) pass through the ports in the area.

"Where do all these chemicals go eventually?" he asked.

"We know all about dirty industry, but why did the investigators spend all their time and money investigating farmers and justifying industry?" he asked.

"I still have a beaker they put in a field some years ago to catch industrial pollution. Certainly they are using more sophisticated equipment now, but it is either blown down by wind or not given the weekly visit necessary to operate it for eight months.

IFA, he vowed, will now investigate the report scientifically and then take the appropriate action.

Askeaton
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