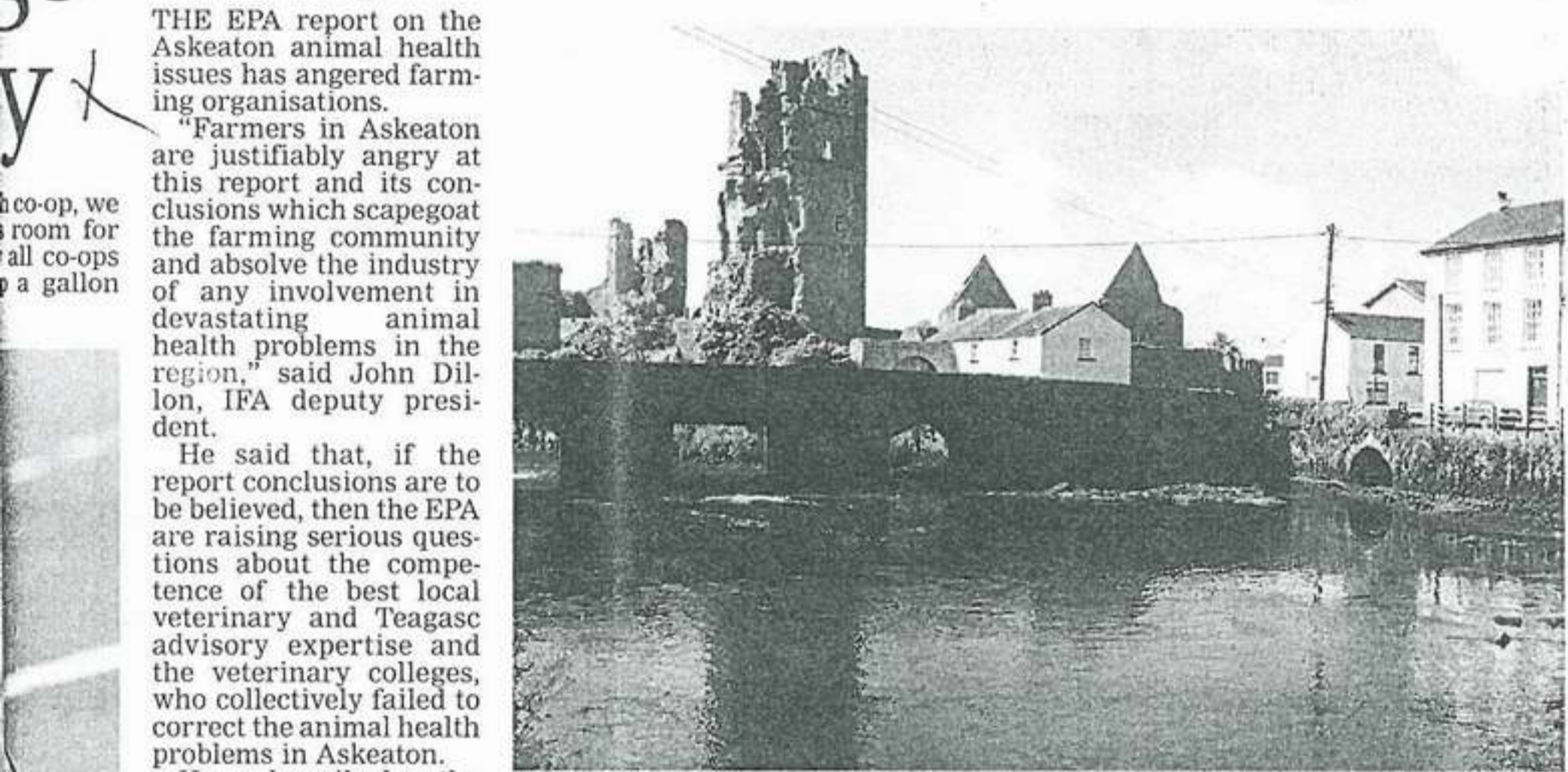




by Park Hotel for the launch of the IFA / Bord Bia innovation programme, William Dolan, IFA regional development  
 eila Kelly, Regional food advisor An Bord Bia and Darragh O'Neill, general manager Castletroy Park Hotel (LL)

# ggs Fury over the Askeaton report



The mediæval town of Askeaton. Its district is in shock after the report

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THE EPA report on the Askeaton animal health issues has angered farming organisations.

"Farmers in Askeaton are justifiably angry at this report and its conclusions which scapegoat the farming community and absolve the industry of any involvement in devastating animal health problems in the region," said John Dillon, IFA deputy president.

He said that, if the report conclusions are to be believed, then the EPA are raising serious questions about the competence of the best local veterinary and Teagasc advisory expertise and the veterinary colleges, who collectively failed to correct the animal health problems in Askeaton.

He described the report as a whitewash which neither definitively identifies the underlying causes of the serious animal health events that occurred, nor makes proper recommendations to safeguard agricultural production where there is heavy industrial activity also taking place.

"Again the protection of ordinary people is considered to be expendable in the interest of insulating major industrial plants from criticism," said Mr Dillon.

He said that people in Askeaton know that something out of the ordinary took place and effected the health of farm animals in the early 1990s and is continuing to have effects to the present day.

"The institutions of the State charged with investigating what actually happened should not take the easy option, placing the blame for these events at the feet of those farmers that suffered most, labelling them as the authors of the their own misfortune," said Mr Dillon.

Meanwhile, David Thompson, chairman of IFA animal health committee said that the report is full of contradictions, omissions and inexcusable inefficiencies including the losing of 17 blood and urine samples (human) over a period of 18 months.

"I, as an animal nutritionist, visited Ryans' farm when the cows were dying and the Somers' farm," said Mr Thompson. "The animals died in considerable pain. In over thirty years solving nutritional farm problems

throughout the 32 counties, I have never seen anything like this and yet the whole issue is pushed aside with statements such as 'some farmers had problems but not exceptional', he said.

ICMSA county chairman Frank Allen said that many questions have been left unanswered.

Mr Allen said the report failed to restore confidence to the Askeaton community and the problem facing the EPA is to establish its credibility in controlling and monitoring sources of industrial pollution in the area.

"I find it hard to believe that reputable scientists put their names to this report," he said. "Is it true that the Norwegian government lodged a complaint with the Irish government about the level of omissions from Moneypoint?"

Mr Allen said that it is unbelievable nonsense to suggest that farmers were primarily to blame.

He noted that report states that there is an increased level of respiratory problems and this must indicate that, at times, there is increased air pollution.

"We must ask the question, what quality of fuel is being used at Moneypoint?" he said.

He said he was extremely disappointed that a report, which cost millions of pounds to carry out failed to deal adequately with the problem.

## Brosnan gets GV in second round

FOLLOWING a week of uncertainty and speculation Kerry Group plc got 82.5 per cent of Golden Vale shares by 3pm deadline on Friday.

The results from second closing date means that the Kerry offer has become unconditional.

Kerry has offered one share for every ten Golden Vale shares, 13 cents per share in cash plus interim and special dividends

worth 4.26 cents per share.

The offer which consists of the share offer and the cash alternative has been extended and will remain open for acceptance until further notice.

The Group advise Golden Vale shareholders who wish to accept the Offer and have not done so should despatch their forms of acceptance as soon as possible.

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