

Heather O'Connor

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Room:

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Biography:

In 2010 Heather graduated from the University of Leeds with a BSc in Biology (Animal Science). As part of her training for this degree she undertook an industrial placement with the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (now AHVLA). Whilst there she worked predominantly within their Neuropathology department, providing support for research and surveillance into TSE's and remained with them as a scientist until 4 months after graduating when she began studying for an MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology at the Royal Veterinary College. She successfully completed this training in September 2011. Following on from this she carried out an internship for consulting firm GHK (now ICF-GHK) assisting with an evaluation of European animal disease control programs before moving to the University of Nottingham in May 2012 to commence her PhD.

Degree Registration:

PhD, due for completion in 2015

Research Topic:

'Biosecurity measures on UK dairy farms: Understanding motivators and barriers'

Summary of research:

Heather is interested in the study of diseases of livestock and the application of epidemiological studies to understand these further. She has an interest in expanding beyond the classic quantitative techniques with the integration of qualitative methods to maximise research potential. Heather has a particular interest in the study of zoonotic diseases and the translation of scientific research into guidance and the development of policy. She is currently undertaking a PhD titled 'Biosecurity measures on UK dairy farms: Understanding motivators and barriers'. The aim of this project is to determine the motivators and barriers to the implementation of biosecurity on UK dairy farms, as perceived by farmers, following a mixed-methodology approach.

Research supervisors:

Dr Marnie Brennan, Dr Wendela Wapenaar, Dr Nick Wright, Professor Jon Huxley

Primary Funding Source:

DairyCo

Recent publications:

Drewe JA, O'Connor HM, Weber N, McDonald RA, Delahay RJ (2013). Patterns of direct and indirect contact between cattle and badgers naturally infected with tuberculosis. *Epidemiology and Infection* **141**:1467-1475. doi: 10.1017/S0950268813000691.

Richens IF, Brennan ML, Wapenaar W, Hobson-West P, Wright N, and O'Connor HM (2013). Methods used to collect farmers' attitudes, motivators and barriers toward cattle production: a rapid review. In: *Innovation from Animal Science – a necessity not an option*, Proceedings of the British Society of Animal Science and the Association of Veterinary Teaching and Research Work. *Advances in Animal Biosciences* **4**(1):13.