

Social
Democrats

Holly CAIRNS TD

Representing West Cork



Holly Cairns TD calls on the Minister for Agriculture to tackle the power of the beef processing industry.

West Cork TD, Holly Cairns, Social Democrats spokesperson on Agriculture, Food, and the Marine, expressed deep concern at the clusters of COVID-19 in Irish meat processing plants and has called on the Minister to tackle the power of the beef processing industry. Examination of the alarming rate of COVID-19 infections in this sector needs to consider the larger context of industrialised agriculture, insufficient workers' rights, and the poor treatment of farmers.

Holly said:

“The clusters of Covid-19 in meat processing plants is very distressing, and is symptomatic of fundamental issues in the sector. When agriculture becomes dominated by big business and vested interests the rights of small farmers, workers, and consumers are affected. The power of the beef lobby is considerable: cartel like practices, decreasing prices for farmers, and the disgraceful treatment of workers. The clusters of COVID-19 in meat plants have occurred, despite warnings from workers and representative organisations. These clusters were avoidable; as they were in direct provision centres - if warnings had been listened to.”

“The global industrialisation of farming has contributed to the creation of viruses and the spread of this pandemic. There are no clusters in small abattoirs, in butcher shops, or on small farms, whereas intensive farming relies on big meat processing plants. Ensuring a food system is secure, is more than stock on shelves, it is about reducing our total reliance on imports and shortening supply chains. The sector should prioritise local economies, connecting producers and consumers, and protecting farmers and workers.”

“We need to start thinking more about how our food is produced. We need to know that our food is produced in a safe, ethical, and fair way. Workers deserve more protection, farmers deserve to be paid properly, and the consumer deserves greater transparency.”

ENDS



+353 86 361 5830



www.hollycairns.ie



holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie



www.socialdemocrats.ie/our-people/holly-mckeevercairns

Date: 22 May 2020

For further information contact:

Richard Scriven
richard.scriven@oireachtas.ie

Holly Cairns TD
holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie
Mob: +353 86 361 5830



+353 86 361 5830



holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie



www.hollycairns.ie



www.socialdemocrats.ie/our-people/holly-mckeevercairns



+353 86 361 5830



holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie



www.hollycairns.ie



www.socialdemocrats.ie/our-people/holly-mckeevercairns