



# National Reference Laboratory for *Trichinella* and *Echinococcus*.



*Trichinella spiralis*

Trichinosis is caused by nematodes of the genus *Trichinella*. Domestic (e.g. pigs) and wild animals (e.g. wild boars, foxes and racoon dogs), which are infected with *Trichinella* larvae, are the natural reservoirs.

Human beings contract this disease from the consumption of raw or insufficiently cooked trichinous meat (e.g. from domestic pigs or wild boars) or from products made from them, from raw sausage or raw ham. Depending on the dose and course of the infection, the disease can trigger symptoms ranging from mild to severe in humans. In rare cases it may prove fatal.



*Echinococcus granulosus*

A number of herbivorous and omnivorous animals act as intermediate hosts of *Echinococcus*. This means they get infected by ingesting the parasite eggs in the contaminated ground and develop parasitic larval stages in their viscera.

Carnivores are definitive hosts for the parasite, and are infected through the consumption of viscera of intermediate hosts that harbour the parasite and also through scavenging infected carcasses.

Humans are accidental intermediate hosts and are not able to transmit the disease.

## About the NRL:

The laboratory forms part of a larger organisation that has well established credentials for its scientific expertise and research and is internationally acknowledged for its representation in global animal health. The Bury St Edmunds laboratory performs a wide range of veterinary diagnostic commercial testing and has a history of statutory testing on behalf of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) for *Trichinella*.

The laboratory is ISO:17025 accredited (UKAS) and acts as a reference point for the Official Control laboratories (OCL) in expertise, advice, training and testing achieved through regular contact, consultancy, inspection and quality checks. We require testing laboratories to participate in a regular external QA scheme initiated from this laboratory using the APHA VetQAS scheme.

We maintain contact with colleagues in EU countries and represent the UK at EU Reference Laboratory (EURL) meetings. We report developments and recommendations that may inform technical changes affecting the UK as well as reviewing current methodologies in digestion and serological techniques. We collaborate with the EURL for improved methods and quality standards by participation in ring trials. Technical projects evaluating novel testing methods are also carried out by the NRL.

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### Further information: Food Standards Agency:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/meat/trichinella-pigs/trichinella-pigs-testing>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/meat/trichinella-pigs>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/guidancenotes/meatregsguid/trichinellatestingwildboar>

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