

# Award Winning Animal Health Computer System is Major E-Government Success

**The Animal Health Computer System (AHCS) was commissioned to support the operation of a range of national animal health programmes.**

Version 1 was tasked with taking analysis outputs completed by a third party, expanding the design, and developing and building the system. Application design and development took approximately 20 months followed by 8 months of comprehensive system and user acceptance testing. Incorporating both back-office functionality for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food staff and an extranet for veterinary practices engaged in animal testing, the system supports over 4000 users and 9 million animal tests are processed through the system each year.

**The system links all of the key players involved in delivering the Department's animal health programmes - veterinary practitioners, laboratories and administrative staff.**

The system integrates with a number of the Department's other computer systems, including the Corporate Customer System and the Laboratory Information System. It also links to the Department's financial system and the Animal Identification and Movement System.

Version 1 was subsequently awarded a publicly contested contract to provide ongoing support, maintenance and enhancement for AHCS. As well as providing proactive application and database support, we have provided a programme of enhancements which has included delivery of system changes at very short notice. For instance, when the risk of an avian flu outbreak was highest, Version 1 quickly put in place functionality to enable poultry flocks to be registered on the system thus providing a national register of poultry enterprises.



The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food plays an essential part in maintaining the high health status of animals in Ireland.

“Version 1 worked with us to build an award-winning Animal Health Computer System which is a mission critical system used on a daily basis by Department staff, private veterinary practitioners and laboratories nationwide, resulting in effectiveness and efficiency improvements in our national animal health and disease control programmes. AHCS integrates with a number of other systems, including the Animal Identification and Movement system providing the Department with a comprehensive and strategic overview of animal health issues, helping to reduce operating costs and contributing, along with other measures, to a fall in disease levels.”

**Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Spokesperson.**

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The system provides major efficiency dividends particularly for the operation of the TB and Brucellosis eradication schemes

- Electronic test reporting has greatly increased efficiency and has reduced delays in submission
- Payment processing has been automated and streamlined.
- High priority herds and tests can be highlighted and prioritised by the system.
- Enhanced reporting gives the Department an overall strategic view of the status of animal health and its varied animal health and disease eradication programmes.

## Recognition

The Department was presented with a **"Public Service Excellence Award"** by the Taoiseach in March 2006 for the development of the system and its success was instrumental in the Department being awarded the **Eircom "Innovation through Technology"** award and the **Inside Government "Innovative Organisation of the Year"** award the same year.

In an **e-government special report** by the Comptroller and Auditor General, **AHCS was highlighted as a major e-government success**. Key points highlighted in the report included the Department's reported **savings of 115 whole time equivalent staff** as a result of the introduction of the system, in addition to enhanced disease control capability and a significant fall in disease levels.



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**VERSION 1**

**Head Office**  
Millennium House  
Millennium Walkway  
Dublin 1  
+353 1 865 7800

**Cork Office**  
NSC Campus  
Mahon  
Cork  
+353 21 435 0073

**Belfast Office**  
The Mount Business Centre  
2 Woodstock Link  
Belfast BT6 8DD  
+44 28 90 730156

[info@version1.com](mailto:info@version1.com)

[www.version1.com](http://www.version1.com)