

# Over 1,800 calves die on Meath farms before age of six weeks

**OVER 1,800 calves born on farms in Meath die before they reach six weeks of age, according to official figures from the Department of Agriculture.**

The department's Animal Identification and Movement (AIM) system report for 2008 reveals that, nationally, 70,000 calves died between birth and six weeks. Based on these national figures, a total of 1,830 calves died on the 2,300 suckler and dairy farms in Meath. And a further 1,100 calves were stillborn.

According to veterinary specialist, Maureen Prendergast, scour accounts for well over half of all calf deaths on Meath farms. Extreme cases of the disease can result in the death of up to 30% of calves in a herd.

"However, on the majority of farms, calf deaths represent only a small proportion of the costs of a scour outbreak. The biggest costs are treatment, additional labour and reduced animal performance," she said.

Maureen Prendergast, who is veterinary adviser with Intervet Schering-Plough, explained that scour is the symptom of a disease caused by bacteria and viruses. Bacterial infection can hit the calf

within a couple of hours after birth. The high risk period for viral infection is five to 10 days after birth.

She stressed that vaccination of cows prior to calving, combined with rigid hygiene and management, are the only effective methods to prevent calf scour.

"Vaccinating the cow anytime between three and 12 weeks prior to calving is proven to provide the antibodies in the cow's colostrum, which will protect the new-born calf," she said. "Farmers should consult their vet to discuss the best vaccination strategy for their herds."



Anne O'Neill was at the active retirement function in the Castle Arch Hotel, Trim



Maureen Grimes was at the "His story" Michael Jackson tribute show in the Solstice

## MASSIVE INCREASE IN CALLS TO MEATH CENTRE

# Calls to male abuse victims centre soar

- By *Niamh Cahill*

**CALLS TO a Meath-based support service for male victims of domestic abuse have more than doubled in the last year, new figures reveal.**

Amen received 125pc more calls during the month of November last year compared to figures for the same month in 2008, as more men seek help following the economic downturn.

Amen chairperson Mary Cleary said calls increased in the run-up to Christmas as fathers expressed concerns about access to their children over the festive season.

Staff at the resource centre on Navan's Railway Street have noted a huge increase in calls in 2009, revealing they had doubled since 2008.

While the recession is not believed to be directly linked to the surge, money worries can exacerbate domestic problems and sometimes result in family separation.

Amen deals with hundreds of men suffering physical abuse in the home every year and has offered assistance to victims and their children throughout Ireland and in countries such as England and Germany.

The ethnicity of clients is also broadening

due to the influx of foreign nationals into Ireland, a staff member disclosed.

One client who wished to remain anonymous recalled his story: "I'm a 50 year old professional male and I'm also a battered husband. My children are grown up so my fears are not around that. I have been married for well over twenty years.

"I have slowly but surely modified my life to such an extent that I have very little life left. I do this so as not to provoke a violent outburst from my wife. I have been punched, kicked, scratched, hit with objects. I've had things thrown at me. I've had my hair pulled."

Another client recalled how he was stabbed by his wife: "I felt heavy blows to my head, still sleepy and dazed I partly woke to see Sxxxx standing over me with a wooden meat tenderiser which had a metal studded head on it. When she finished hitting me I saw a small steak knife in her hand. She stuck it in the thick duvet cover. I felt a sharp pain in my navel area."

Amen group meetings will commence on Tuesday, January 12, at 8pm in St Anne's Resource Centre, Railway Street, Navan. There are 10 sessions per course.

Several clients have reported receiving immense support through the meetings, which were set up to help victims overcome their

anguish and difficulties.

Amen can be contacted by phoning (046) 9076864 or 086 6013448.



Mary Cleary

## Cigarettes and cash stolen in raid

**A GARDA investigation has been launched after a large quantity of cigarettes and an undisclosed sum of cash was stolen from a pub.**

O'Dwyers pub and off-license at Johnstown in Navan was burgled in the early hours of Tuesday, December 29, after thieves cut wires to deactivate the alarm.

Cash was stolen from two safes after intruders managed to force them open and a large amount of cigarettes was also taken.

Gardai believe a vehicle would have been needed to transport the goods and they have appealed to anyone with information to contact them. CCTV of the incident is to be viewed as part of the investigation.

Anyone who was in the area after 2am and who noticed suspicious activity is asked to contact Navan Garda Station on (046) 9079930.

## New nursing home is planned

**A NEW 90-bedroom nursing home is planned for Ashbourne.**

Eracase Ltd and The Bective Partnership have applied to Meath Co. Council for planning permission for the multi-million euro project at Hunter's Lane, Dunreagh Townland.

The plans also include a kitchen, reception, dining and sitting rooms and 58 carparking spaces.

Meath Co. Council is set to rule on the project by February 10 next.

Meantime, separate plans have also been lodged with the local authorities for new single-storey extensions to the front and rear of St Colmille's Nursing and Convalescent Home on Oldcastle Road, Kells.

Thomas Ryan, Raymond and Kieran Argue and Seamus Comer have submitted the proposals which comprise an extra 26 bedrooms and ancillary services as well as 24 two-bedroom 'assisted living' homes to the rear of the site.

A decision is also expected in early February 2010.