

Farmer forced to sleep in his jeep

A farmer was forced to sleep in his jeep a mile from his own farmhouse following the installation of a phone mast on his land.

John Ryan of Cashel told the Kilkenny Advertiser on Monday that "to allow a phone mast to be installed on my land back in 2003 was the worst decision of my life, as my health has been badly effected since. For the past few years there has been awful pressure in my head and tightening in my chest which only began to happen after the mast had been installed on my farm. In my opinion these masts should only be installed far away from houses and farm dwellings."

Mr Ryan also said that his herd of cows have also been affected following the installation of the mast. "They are continually agitated and in 2004 we had four deformed calves born on the farm, which was unheard of before. We have also had situations of cows coming in calf on more than one occasion, which is completely unnatural."

Mr Ryan also revealed that he was hospitalised during 2004 when he was told that the rhythm of his heart was not correct. "The doctors told me that the mast was affecting my health, and that it should be turned off. During that particular time I was forced to sleep away from home in my jeep because I just could not sleep in my own bed. It was a terrible time."

John Ryan also said that "things could improve this coming August as the mast contract will be up then and it may be removed. We won't be in favour of it staying anyway, so hopefully life will return to what it was a few years ago."

On the subject of phone masts Mary White, the Deputy Leader of the Green Party who will be contesting the general election in the Carlow-Kilkenny constituency in a few weeks time said that Mr Ryan whom she has met on a couple of occasions "has suffered terribly on a personal level, and it is quite obvious that some people are very sensitive to the presence of phone masts."

Mary White told the Kilkenny Advertiser that "since the mobile companies are making millions they should be investing in fibre optic cables which must be a priority to eliminate masts. Another alternative should be the use of satellites, because the health of the general population must be protected as far as possible."

Just recently, an expert group commissioned by the Government said that there is no evidence of health effects from mobile phone masts. Its 'Health Effects of Electromagnetic Fields' report found no health hazard from mobile phones, phone masts, or power lines. The report added that the chance of any harm from electronic magnetic sources was very small according to present knowledge.

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