



## The importance of biosecurity when purchasing cattle

When purchasing cattle, there is a risk of a range of diseases being introduced into your herd. The risks increase with the number of animals bought and the number of herds from which they come. If introducing animals, plan to do so as few times as possible and be aware of how the health of your home bred animals may be affected by the health status of the bought-in animals.

### **BUY IN AS FEW ANIMALS AND FROM AS FEW HERDS AS POSSIBLE**

Is it essential that you buy in? Minimise the number of animals that need to be purchased. If possible, buy from farmers with whom you have built up a relationship, so that you know their herd's health status.

#### **SELECT LOWER RISK HERDS**

Sellers should be asked about the BVD test result history of their herds over the previous year: herds that have had BVD Positive (BVDPs) in this time are more likely to have circulating virus present and pose a high risk, particularly where BVDP animals have been in the herd after the breeding date of any cattle being sold. While cattle being sold must have a BVD Negative status, they could still transfer the virus if they become transiently infected or are pregnant and carrying a BVDP calf (Trojans), or via the spread of virus contaminated vehicles, equipment or clothing.

#### **SELECT LOWER RISK ANIMALS**

Buy in low-risk animals: for example, younger animals or non-pregnant animals. Avoid buying any stock with signs of disease. If the purchase of pregnant animals is unavoidable, purchase animals from herds where the risk of pregnant animals contacting the BVD virus has been minimised. Laboratory tests to identify Trojan cattle definitively are not available. However, if a direct farm-to-farm move is considered necessary, pre-purchase blood tests for antibodies to the BVD virus may be carried out (as an animal that is negative for both virus and antibodies is unlikely to be a Trojan).

#### **REDUCE TRANSPORT RISKS**

Use your own clean, disinfected transport where possible. Don't mix your animals with animals belonging to other herdowners during transport. Opportunities for contact of pregnant stock with cattle of unknown status during purchase and transport should be minimized.

#### **IMPLEMENT A QUARANTINE PERIOD**

Quarantined animals should be in complete isolation from the rest of the herd and should not share the same airspace. Animals should be quarantined for at least four weeks, during which period you should:

- Monitor for any clinical signs of disease
- Vaccinate and dose animals to ensure they have received the same protective treatments as your own animals
- Test for specific diseases to reduce the risk of accidental introduction of these diseases
- Quarantine and isolate pregnant stock on arrival and until they have calved and the calves been tested with negative results.