

BVD Programme Stakeholder Engagement Plan 2022

The aim of the NI BVD Programme is to achieve the eradication of BVD. Farmer cooperation with the scheme has been excellent overall and industry stakeholders have taken significant measures to encourage the rapid culling of Persistently Infected (PI) cattle.

Despite disease levels not falling to the extent that had been hoped for in 2021, the BVD Implementation Group is determined to rekindle the drive to eradication. This is being done through several strands: consistent messaging and provision of the knowledge that will encourage farmers to identify and cull PIs, for the benefit of their infected herds as well as associated and neighbouring herds; and ongoing engagement with DAERA, requesting the introduction of a range of essential measures.

The disease control plan for 2022 aims to consolidate the progress made since the start of the compulsory programme, reduce slippage and return disease prevalence to a downward track.

1. KEY MESSAGE: Isolate and cull BVD Positive cattle at the earliest opportunity.

If a decision is taken to retest, arrange for your vet to take blood samples three weeks after the initial sample was taken (ie three weeks from the date that the tag was inserted in the calf's ear or from when an initial blood sample was taken).

2. Ear tissue tag testing continues to be a compulsory requirement.

In line with veterinary and scientific advice, ear tissue tag testing is likely to continue until eradication is achieved.

3. Test cattle that do not have a BVD status, to complete your herd's BVD profile.

Sample and test cattle with previous 'No Sample' results and/ or older cattle that were born before the start of the compulsory scheme (1st March 2016) and have not had a Negative status calf registered against them.

4. Tighten BVD biosecurity with regard to private sales.

Find out if BVD has been present during the previous year in herds from which you are considering buying stock, particularly breeding females, to reduce the risk of buying in Transiently Infected animals or a 'Trojan' female that could be carrying a BVD PI calf.

5. Tighten BVD biosecurity with regard to neighbouring herds.

Avoid grazing cattle on land where cattle from other herds are in adjacent fields unless there is double fencing (with a gap of 3 metres) or stock-proof hedging. This will minimise the risk of transmission of infectious agents from infected animals in neighbouring herds.

6. Industry measures to control BVD remain in place.

The voluntary abattoir ban on the slaughter of BVD Positive cattle remains in force and retention of BVD Positive cattle continues to be a non-conformance in the Farm Quality Assurance Scheme.

AHWNI will continue to issue advisory letters and to contact affected farmers by phone where possible, to discuss the implications of BVD breakdowns. In hotspot areas, AHWNI will issue text messages to inform herd owners of potential risks to herds, recommending that steps are taken to maximise biosecurity precautions.