

Notifiable disease status welcomed for BVD

AHWNI has welcomed the announcement that Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) will become a notifiable disease in NI from 8th November 2023. The implications of notifiable status are that the suspected presence of BVD, whether due to clinical signs or due to positive laboratory antigen test results, must be passed on to DAERA immediately.

The BVD Implementation Group has been requesting that BVD would be made notifiable for several years. This request was made initially as an outcome of the ambition to deal with all BVD positive test results in a timely manner, so that the risk of onward transmission of the virus, to other cattle on affected farms and to cattle on neighbouring farms would be minimised. The legislative change follows the requirements of the EU Animal Health Law regarding the prevention and control of BVD.

A responsibility to notify BVD falls on anyone who suspects or detects the disease, whether a farmer, veterinary practitioner or a member of staff working in a relevant testing laboratory. Prompt notification of the positive result (whether as a result of diagnostic testing following a disease investigation or confirmatory blood testing) will assist in the early identification of new outbreaks, allowing tailored advice to be given to the herd owner at the earliest opportunity.

The herd level incidence of BVD has fallen below 3.00% (to 2.99% for the 12 months from 1st October 2022 to 30th September 2023) for the first time during the lifetime of the compulsory programme, representing a decrease of 74% from the end of the first year of the programme.