

BVD testing during Covid-19

The BVD Programme, including the tag and test requirements for newborn calves, continues to be delivered during the current coronavirus situation.

Farmers are encouraged to take and dispatch ear tissue tag samples promptly, so that an excessive backlog of untested samples does not build up at the approved testing laboratories, should laboratory staff be affected by Covid-19. Farmers should also isolate calves until BVD Negative results are received.

Calves should be tagged as soon as possible after birth once they are dry. It is important that the ear tissue samples are sent off quickly and that correct postage is applied to the sample envelopes. Royal Mail advises that the large letter fee (£1.15 at present) should be sufficient for up to 10 samples provided they are packed flat, rather than bulked up within the envelope. Underpayment and failure to package samples appropriately may lead to sample processing being delayed or samples being disposed of untested.

At present there are no delays to approved laboratory turnaround times, however it is possible that the turnaround times may increase during the pandemic.

In the event of receiving a BVD Positive result, it is worth considering the BVD history of the herd and whether infection has previously been confirmed when weighing up the options of immediate disposal or retesting of the positive calves. A significant proportion of initially positive calves have infection confirmed on retesting: during the period 1st March 2019 to 29th February 2020, 83.6% of retested BVD Positive animals had a further positive result. Private vets can provide specific advice on dealing with a BVD breakdown.

The BVD Programme will provide additional updates as the situation develops.

For all BVD queries, please contact the AHWNI helpdesk on 028 7963 9333/
info@animalhealthni.com.