



## Higher levels of BVD infection in Fermanagh

Recent BVD Programme statistics indicate that, although BVD outbreaks are present across NI, there are significant BVD issues in Fermanagh compared to other parts.

The data shows that between 01/01/2020 and 23/06/2020, over 20% of all NI beef herds that had an initial positive or inconclusive BVD result were in the Enniskillen DVO area. The next highest level was found to be in Newry DVO at 15%.

During the same period, in dairy herds, at the animal level, Enniskillen DVO had the highest percentage of initial positive or inconclusive results in NI (0.63%), a level that was over twice as high as the next highest DVO, Newry (0.31%). At the animal level in all herds, Enniskillen DVO had the highest level of initial positive or inconclusive results, sitting at 0.47% tests, with the next highest being Newry DVO at 0.38%, followed by Armagh DVO at 0.37%.

There are concerns that hotspot areas may exist, where rates of infection are highest, however mapping data is not available currently, so farmers are advised to implement biosecurity measures that will reduce the risk of transmission of the BVD virus to their herds.

Neighbouring animals can be an important disease threat. Good stock-proof boundary fencing that is well maintained should prevent nose-to-nose contact between herds as well as preventing break-ins or break-outs. If possible, it is worth trying to avoid grazing fields at the same time as when neighbouring land is occupied with livestock. These measures are vital on out-farms also.

Any farmer who has had a BVD positive result disclosed in an animal from their herd has the option of getting it retested (using a blood sample taken by a private vet) and should cull any Persistently Infected (PI) animals at the earliest opportunity. Where BVD infection has previously been confirmed in their herds, many farmers take the decision to cull new positive cases immediately on receipt of the result. These steps not only reduce the risk of future cases of BVD in their herds but also reduce the likelihood of the infection being passed to neighbouring herds.

The BVD Implementation Group has requested that new legislation is brought in that would allow information on BVD breakdowns to be shared with at-risk herd keepers, to allow them to apply targeted biosecurity measures in order to reduce the risk of the BVD virus entering their herds.