

## **BVD Programme Stakeholder Engagement Plan 2021**

The prevalence of BVD infection in cattle in NI has fallen considerably over the past year, dropping to 0.29% (at the rolling 12-month animal level) from 0.66% at the end of the first year of the compulsory programme. The number of BVD Positive animals being retained on farms for more than 5 weeks also fell significantly during the year, with 118 retained at the start of December 2020 compared with 413 at the same point last year, representing a decrease of over 70%.

The BVD Implementation Group is keen to see an acceleration of progress to eradication and the following plan for 2021 is aimed at encouraging all stakeholders to engage fully with the programme in order to maintain and build on the advancements made.

**1. Isolate and cull BVD Positive cattle as soon as possible.**

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

**2. Ensure that correct postage is put on envelopes containing tissue tags to avoid non-delivery.**

For up to 10 samples a large letter stamp will be required. If in doubt or for larger packages, check the postage required at a Post Office. Please include your herd number and return address on the envelope.

**3. Consider testing animals which 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 (1<sup>st</sup> March 2016) and have not had a Negative status calf registered against them.

**4. Ask if BVD has been present in herds from which you are purchasing stock, particularly breeding females.**

Reduce the risk of buying in a 'Trojan' female that could be carrying a BVD Persistently Infected calf and reduce the risk of buying in Transiently Infected animals that could pass the virus on to other livestock on your farm.

**5. Note that 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.

**6. Ear tissue tag testing remains as a compulsory requirement.**

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

Farmer cooperation with the BVD Programme has been excellent overall, and with continuing engagement, industry can press on to the target of the elimination of the BVD virus from the NI cattle population.