



## Biosecurity at Grazing

Biosecurity may be described as measures that will reduce the risk of introduction of infectious disease to cattle on your farm. The spread of many common transmissible diseases can be controlled by adopting higher levels of biosecurity as part of routine management practices.

Infectious diseases can be spread to grazing cattle by a variety of means, including:

- direct contact with neighbouring livestock across boundaries (or break-ins/ break-outs)
- contaminated water (streams or surface water)
- manure spreading
- contaminated equipment/ boots/ clothing
- other wildlife species.

To counteract these risks, the following areas should be addressed:

- Do not graze 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 (eg in saliva, mucus, faeces, urine, discharges from calving or abortions).
- **Communal grazing is high risk**, so ensure an agreement is reached with other farmers that no stock from herds that have had BVD positive cattle present within the last 12 months are allowed on to the shared land. Any BVD outbreaks in co-grazing herds in the past should have been fully investigated and vaccination considered where appropriate.
- **Do not graze cattle and sheep together**, as sheep can be a source of BVD virus.
- Ensure that there is a **mains water supply** in fields being grazed and consider preventing livestock accessing rivers or streams.
- Aim to **spread slurry on arable land or silage ground** where possible and do not graze land for at least three weeks after spreading. Ideally, do not import slurry or manure.
- **Ensure any visitors disinfect boots** before entering or leaving the farm. Best practice is to check that borrowed equipment is cleaned thoroughly before and after use.
- **Keep feed troughs, water troughs and mineral licks raised** above the ground, moving them frequently to avoid poaching and intensive contamination of the area around them.

***There will be progressive benefits for your herd's health if multiple small but effective improvements in biosecurity are introduced.***

For further information contact the BVD Helpdesk (028 7963 9333) or [info@animalhealthni.com](mailto:info@animalhealthni.com).