



BVD Herd Investigations

Herd health management involves identifying and controlling animal health problems particular to an individual farm. For all herds with BVD test-positive calves, a structured herd investigation by a trained veterinary practitioner can provide valuable advice on how best to exclude disease from the herd. When biosecurity recommendations are followed, wider benefits are produced in relation to improved animal health and welfare, improved production efficiency and improved business profitability.

BVD herd investigations follow a standard format and have several goals:

- **to identify a plausible source or sources of infection**
Based on the time period during which the dam could have been infected, and her location during the period, the vet, as part of a farm visit, can consider a series of possible transmission pathways from sources of infection that may be either inside or outside of the herd.
- **to ensure that the herd is left free from BVDV**
The vet will also identify and test any animals within the herd whose status is either not known or is suspect (e.g. animals with a DAMPI status due to their having produced a persistently infected (PI) calf). This is to identify any previously unidentified PI animals within the herd.
- **to review herd biosecurity and agree farm-specific measures to prevent re-introduction of BVD**
Consideration of the various transmission pathways allows the vet to identify key risks on a herd by herd basis. From this, biosecurity recommendations to reduce the risk of re-introduction will be discussed in detail with the herd owner, who will receive a written copy of these.

Several small but effective improvements in BVD biosecurity practices can have a cumulative beneficial effect on herd health.

For further information on key changes to the BVD eradication programme for 2017, visit www.animalhealthni.com or contact the BVD Helpdesk (028 79639333).