



BULLETIN No.5
Nov 2018

The role of vaccination in the BVD programme

Advice from the all-island BVD Technical Working Group

The goal of the current programme is the eradication of BVD virus from NI, with the core element being to identify those animals persistently infected (PI) with BVD virus and remove them from the cattle population. Associated with this, adequate biosecurity measures to prevent the accidental introduction (bio-exclusion) and spread (bio-containment) of infection in herds is critical.

Increasing compliance with the programme, by culling Persistently Infected animals promptly, will hasten successful eradication of BVD, and equally shorten the period when provision for vaccination is required.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF VACCINATION?

The main purpose of BVD vaccination is to induce a protective immunity in breeding animals to avoid a range of negative outcomes of infection on reproduction, including failure to conceive, abortion, birth defects and most importantly the creation of calves that are persistently infected with BVD virus.

WHEN IS VACCINATION NECESSARY?

As the programme progresses, the prevalence of PI animals will decrease, followed by a decrease in the prevalence of animals with natural immunity following exposure. On the one hand this means that the likelihood of pregnant cattle being exposed to virus will decrease but on the other hand the potential negative impact of such exposure would increase. In the absence of natural immunity arising from infection, vaccination may be used as an

alternative means of inducing immunity during this period. Vaccination acts as a protective measure should a breakdown in biosecurity occur.

However, it should be noted that the available BVD vaccines will not provide 100% protection in all circumstances, even when stored and used correctly, particularly where pregnant cattle are exposed to high levels of BVD virus.

CONSULT WITH YOUR VETERINARY PRACTITIONER

Decisions on the use of BVD vaccine, including when to stop a vaccination programme, are herd-specific and should be taken by each farmer in discussion with their own veterinary practitioner. A key factor for consideration is the likelihood of introduction of infection. Introduced animals are the single biggest risk. Other risks including direct contact (e.g. at boundaries, shows and sales) and indirect contact (e.g. contaminated environments, equipment, clothing or hands) should also be considered.

Further information is available in the BVD FAQ section of this website which can be accessed by [clicking here](#).