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IBR – Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis – in NI

What is IBR?

IBR (Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis) is a highly infectious disease of cattle of all ages, caused by a bovine herpes virus (BoHV-1). A survey of 500 dairy and beef cow herds in NI found evidence of exposure to the infection in ~75% of dairy herds and ~87% of beef herds (non-vaccinating).

What are the clinical signs?

Clinical signs may include:

- Decreased appetite, milk drop
- High temperature
- Rapid and loud breathing, coughing
- Discharge from the eyes and nose
- Multiple animals often affected in a group
- Inflammation of male or female reproductive tracts
- Abortion (less common).

Note that some infections may be sub-clinical (ie have no clinical signs but affect production).

How do animals become infected?

Susceptible animals may become infected due to the introduction to the herd of animals that were previously infected but have now recovered). These lifelong carriers may shed the virus, particularly following periods of stress, such as weaning, castration, dehorning, transport and mixing. Thus the virus persists in the herd (see Figure 1) and can spread through close contact between animals, semen from infected bulls and contaminated equipment.

How can I protect my herd?

- Keep a closed herd (including bulls)
- Check the health status of any herd you are buying from. Isolate bought in stock for a month and blood test.
- Consult your veterinary practitioner about suitable biosecurity and vaccination protocols.

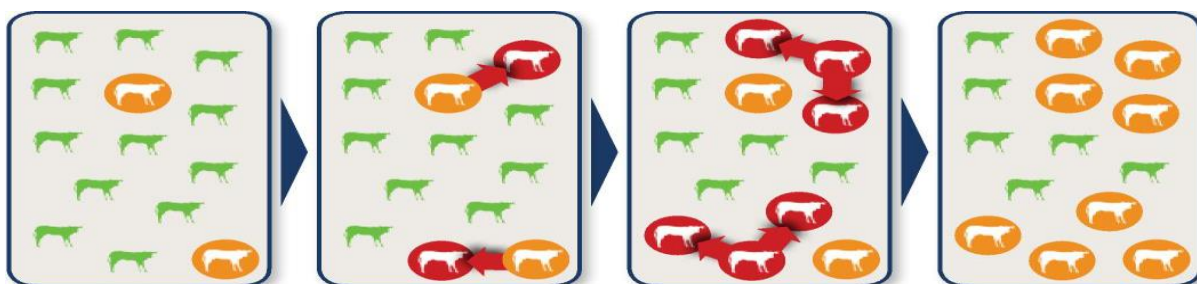





Figure 1: Spread of IBRV within a herd following reactivation and shedding of virus from carrier animals.

 'Apparently' healthy latently infected
  Newly infected animals
  carriers (antibody test positive)