

Quick Reference Guide

A guide to SAC's Premium Cattle Health Scheme for Bovine Virus Diarrhoea (BVD)

Why is BVD important?

- BVD virus causes infertility and abortion.
- BVD virus causes deformities in calves.
- BVD virus causes fatal Mucosal Disease.
- BVD virus suppresses disease resistance leading to more calf scour and pneumonia.
- SAC economists calculate that losses from BVD in a 100 cow beef herd can exceed £45,000 over a ten year period. Losses in dairy herds can be twice this level, £90,000 in a 100 cow herd.
- BVD has been eradicated from many countries and regions including Shetland in the UK.
- Survey work has shown that in 2006-7 16% of Scottish beef herds had evidence of active BVD infection.

How is BVD transmitted?

- Most commonly through direct contact with persistently infected (Pi) animals.
- Indirectly from equipment and clothing that has been in contact with Pi animal
- From semen from transiently infected bulls
- Between ruminant species such as sheep and deer (rarely)



How can you control BVD?

For herds that show no evidence of BVD there is an accreditation programme that safeguards freedom from disease. For herds where the disease is present there is a control and eradication programme to remove the disease from the herd. Vaccination can be used effectively to control the disease and can be used in accredited herds.

To determine the best approach for your herd we recommend that you discuss your objectives for the herd with your veterinary surgeon. At this meeting the herd biosecurity can be reviewed and upgraded to meet with the scheme requirements and a testing schedule drawn up to determine the disease status of the herd.

Key facts

- BVD is a major cause of financial loss to British beef and dairy farmers
- SAC provides an effective and economical BVD Screening and Eradication Programme for infected herds
- The BVD Accreditation Programme provides assurance and the status "accredited free of BVD"
- The Scheme is licensed by CHcCS and all tests are accredited by UKAS to ISO17025.

BVD Control and Eradication programme

- Plan the approach with your vet to include herd testing.
- Review and upgrade herd biosecurity programme.
- Where recent BVD infection has been identified in the herd, a herd screen should be carried out for the presence of virus.
- In beef herds this can be achieved by sampling all the calves and the older stock that are not the mother of a tested calf.
- In dairy herd this can be achieved by testing all the calves, the dry cows and the bulk tank for the presence of virus. If the bulk tank is positive, individual cow test would be required.
- Virus positive animals should be confirmed by a second blood test and removed from the herd.
- The mothers of virus positive calves should also be tested for virus.
- All calves born in the herd in the 12 months since the last virus positive animal was removed from the herd should be tested.
- Once this is completed the first group of calves that reach nine months of age can be tested for antibody (Check test). If this is negative this will be the first qualifying test for accreditation.

Note that this document is a guide to the disease and the testing programmes. It does not cover all testing outcomes or variations in testing programmes for the control and eradication of BVD.