



# AUGUST 2024

## NEW WELSH BVD REGULATIONS

As you may be aware the Welsh Assembly Government has brought in new regulations in a bid to eradicate Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) virus from Wales.

**What is BVD?** BVD is a viral infection of cattle which can cause a wide variety of clinical signs. Although it is known as Bovine Viral Diarrhoea, scour is not a common clinical sign and it is not the most serious. In breeding cattle BVD can result in abortions, stillbirths, infertility and calves born with congenital defects. In younger cattle BVD can cause widespread immunosuppression in the group resulting in outbreaks of diarrhoea and pneumonia. In a small number of cases, calves which are born alive but have been infected with BVD during the mid stages of pregnancy are known as Persistently Infected (PI) cattle. This means they will continuously shed the virus for their entire life. These cattle can look completely normal but will continually excrete virus and infect other animals. Ultimately, many PI cattle die prematurely as the virus mutates and they suffer fatal Mucosal Disease.

**Is there a risk to human health? No**

**Is it a problem in Wales? Yes.** During the Gwaredu BVD scheme 83% of the herds in Wales were tested and 28% of those herds were positive. This indicated that the animals in the herd had been exposed to BVD virus.



### What are the rules?

In the period from 1st July 2024, up until 1st July 2025 **ALL** cattle keepers in Wales must blood sample a small selection of animals within the herd to see if the virus is present in the herd. This is known as a "Sentinel Blood Test" which is ideally taken from 5 homebred animals aged between 9-18 months old, from each separate management group. Herds which test positive should do further testing to look for PI animals. This sentinel testing should take place annually.

**Any PI (persistently infected) animals subsequently detected as a result of further testing will be required to be kept in isolation for the remainder of their lives.** There will be no restrictions on non-negative herds during the first 12 months of the new scheme. Therefore, only individual PI animals will be restricted during this period. However, where disease is confirmed, farmers will be strongly advised to take steps to eliminate BVD from their herd before 1st July 2025. From 1.7.2025, movement restrictions will be placed on herds that test non negative (i.e. evidence that they have been exposed to BVD virus) and more onerous testing protocols will be imposed.

Ideally, any PIs should be culled as soon as they are identified as they are a constant source of infection. In our experience, we are aware of farmers who have knowingly sold PIs through the market or privately to other farmers, resulting in **disastrous consequences!!**

**Where will all this data be stored?** A new database is being set up, BVD Cymru database, which will store the results and assign a BVD status to each herd.

Details of the new scheme are still to be verified so please speak to your vet with any queries.

**I BVD Tag & Test all my stock – do I need to do the blood test?** Yes. Even if you BVD tag all your calves at birth you will still have to do the annual "sentinel blood test". This is to fall in line with the scheme and it's also a good way to ensure that the herd is clear of BVD. But Tag and Test is the fastest and best way to ensure none of your stock are infected with BVDv at birth...keep it up!

**Is the testing free?** No. Unlike the Gwaredu BVD Scheme this will not be paid for. Farmers will have to pay for the testing, which is likely to cost between £50-150/year, but it is best to speak to your vet for a price. The best way to reduce costs is to do the screen at the annual TB test.

**I vaccinate my breeding stock, will this interfere with the sentinel test?** No, as long as the youngstock are not vaccinated it should not affect the results. Vaccination, alongside good biosecurity, is the best way to protect your herd from BVD infection.



## USK SHOW- SATURDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER



Don't forget to come and visit us. Our trade stand will be in the usual position - opposite the cattle rings. We will have plenty of refreshments and activities for all to enjoy!

### PRODUCTS OF THE MONTH

#### SPOTINOR & ECTOFLY

We stock convenient pour on products for prevention & treatment of fly control for your cattle and sheep.

Please give us a call for further information.



## SUMMER SCOUR SYNDROME IN DAIRY CALVES



SRUC have recently reported a case of this new syndrome. They think that diet is a large part of the story, as cases often occur soon after turnout in calves which have moved from a straw and concentrate based diet to a grass-based diet. Ground that has received fertilizer or recent slurry applications may be higher risk and the fact that calves are learning to graze may mean that they eat more leaf than stem, reducing their fibre intake if on lush pasture.

- Typically younger calves are affected (3-6 months of age), but the syndrome has been reported in calves up to 12 months of age.
- A larger proportion of calves in a group can be affected and mortality rates of up to 40% in some groups have been reported.
- The cases have typically tested negative for parasitic gastroenteritis, coccidiosis, salmonellosis, yersiniosis, BVD, MCF and IBR.
- Some animals recover slowly upon housing and return to their previous diet, but others continue to waste.
- Oral and oesophageal ulceration and necrosis have been a feature of some of these cases and Bovine popular stomatitis virus or pseudocowpox virus have been isolated from some of the oral and oesophageal lesions. Their theory is that this is a secondary or opportunist viral infection, but none the less this secondary pathology is significant.

They feel that diet transition is particularly important. It is helpful if calves receive some grass-based forage prior to turnout (silage, hay or haylage). When calves are first turned out they suggest they receive their full ration outside that they received when housed to start with as they learn to graze. This diet can then be scaled back as they eat more grass over time. **Please give us a call if you have cases or outbreaks and we can discuss the best way to investigate further.**



## FUNDING FOR FARM HEALTH & PERFORMANCE ADVICE IN ENGLAND



Through the Defra Farm Resilience Fund and XLVets we can access funding for up to four farm visits from your vet. **Funding of up to £1500 per farm** (£385/visit) is available if all requirements are met before **31st March 2025**. Up to 500 farms can access this on a first-come first-served basis. Farms that have received direct payments since October 2022 can access this support, free of charge. It is designed to help support the right business choices for the future to ensure the farm business thrives without Basic Payment Scheme (BPS). Examples of where the money can be used include BVD, lameness, mastitis, infertility, parasite control, health plans, iceberg disease, youngstock health or trace elements.

**If you are interested in accessing this funding, please call the office to discuss the next step.**