

# Latest all-island BVD maps display lowest incidence to date



The most recent maps produced for the NI and ROI BVD Programmes by the Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis (CVERA), University College Dublin, show that excellent progress has been made in 2023 in driving down the incidence of BVD infection, thanks to the efforts of farmers and industry partners.

The anonymised maps have been produced through an ongoing collaboration between Animal Health Ireland (AHI) and Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI) who co-ordinate the respective programmes, and DAERA and DAFM.

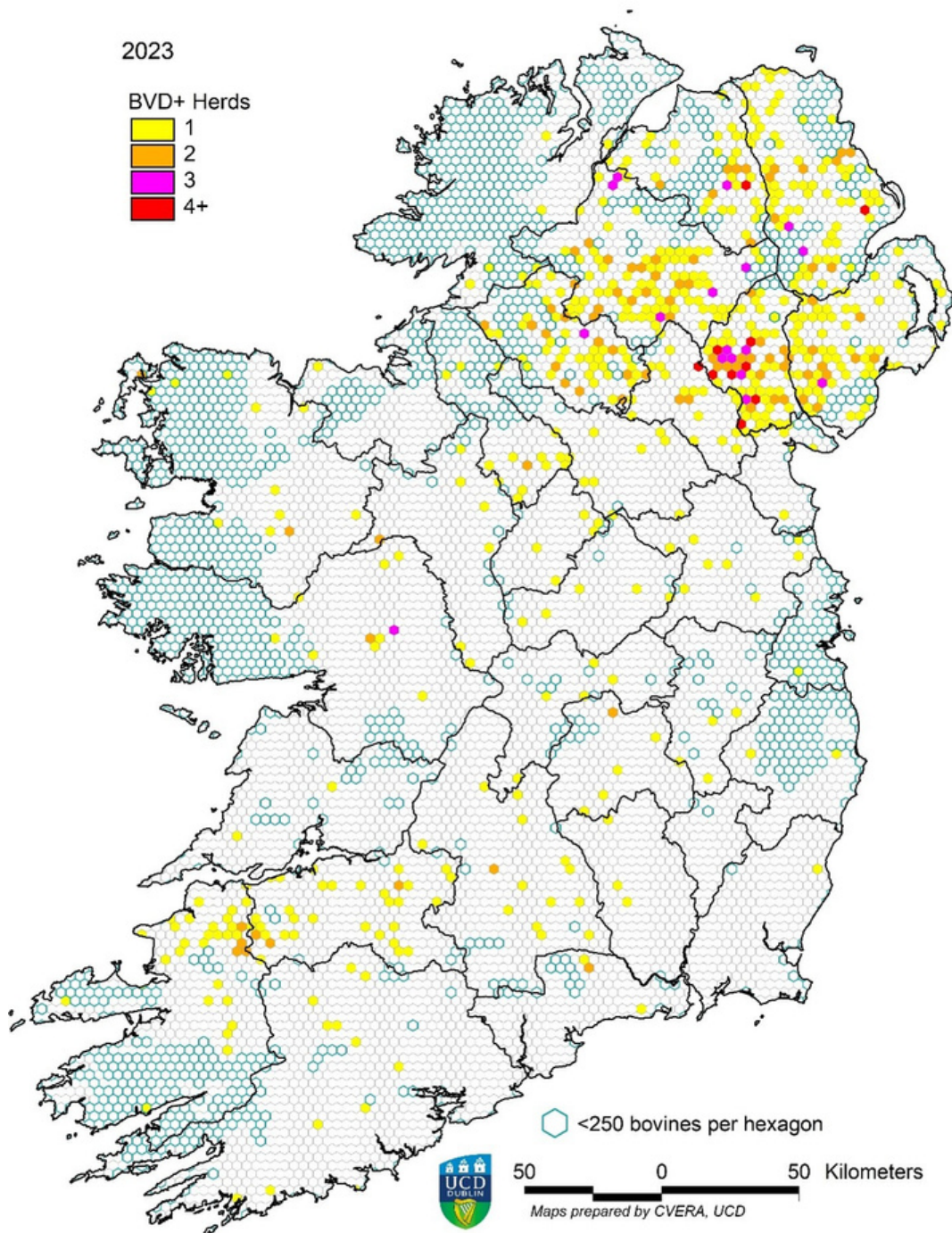
The maps display a higher level of infection in NI compared to the ROI (Figure 1); there is a need for the highest levels of biosecurity in infected herds, particularly in Co Armagh. In NI, the animal level incidence has fallen from 0.264% at the end of 2022 to 0.211% at the end of 2023, and the herd level incidence has decreased by over 76% since the start of the compulsory programme.

The further drop in disease levels in NI in 2023 has occurred due to several factors: in particular, there has been a notable decrease in the number of Persistently Infected animals that have been retained for 28 days following disclosure of positive results. As a result, the risk of viral transmission to livestock on those farms and to neighbouring farms has been reduced.

The NI BVD Implementation Group continues to request new legislation that will address the risks presented by movement of transiently infected or 'Trojan' animals out of breakdown herds and that will allow sharing of information to allow other herds to make informed decisions about herd biosecurity and purchases. AHWNI continues to engage with all herd owners whose herds are in breakdown situations, to advise on how the virus can be eradicated at the farm level.

AHWNI chief executive Dr Sam Strain commented, "The maps demonstrate the substantial advances that have been made in tackling BVD through both Programmes. Crucially, the number of Persistently Infected animals that have been retained within NI has reduced very substantially, reflecting the considerable efforts of farmers and industry partners in addressing the infection.

However, the contrast with ROI illustrates both what can be achieved with a wider range of programme tools as well as what still needs to be done in NI. AHWNI continues to work with industry and government so that all the tools that are needed to eradicate this infection are in place and NI finally becomes BVD free."



**Figure 1: Map showing distribution of herds with BVD Positive calves from 01/01/2023 to 31/12/2023. Herds in the coloured hexagons and adjacent hexagons may be at increased risk of having BVD Positive births.**

#### Notes for editors

1. The maps are based on anonymised data and fixed sized hexagonal units and show the number of herds with positive results, allowing local patterns to be seen. Each hexagon represents 10 km<sup>2</sup>, with a radius of less than 2km.
2. Updated figures for both programmes are published regularly at <https://animalhealthireland.ie/programmes/bvd/programme-results/>, with a series of monthly maps for ROI only available at <https://animalhealthireland.ie/programmes/bvd/bvd-maps/> and <https://animalhealthni.com/health-programmes/programme-results/>
3. Approval by the European Commission of the ROI programme has led to increased requirements for animal movements, including those from NI, to prevent introduction of infection. DAERA have published guidance of these requirements at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/bvd-requirements-export-cattle-eu-member-states-approved-bvd-eradication-programme-or-bvd-free>
4. For further information, please contact AHWNI [info@animalhealthni.com](mailto:info@animalhealthni.com)