

# Sporadic outbreaks of BVD continue to cause concern – AHWNI

## 27 Oct 2025



While the incidence of BVD locally has remained at a constant level for the last two years, sitting at between two and three percent, according to Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI) the previous downward trend has paused and sporadic cases of BVD continue to cause concern.

### **Risks in breakdown herds**

Across NI, in herds with infection detected during the past 3 months, over half of the affected herds had BVD Positive animals present on farm last winter during the critical time period when the dams of the latest Positives would have been infected, so the source of current infection is most likely to be the previous cases on those particular farms. Many of the affected farmers have decided to vaccinate their herds in order to reduce the risk of further vertical transmission of the infection to developing calves through their mothers during pregnancy.

### **Purchasing risks**

In approximately a quarter of the herds with recently disclosed infection, new stock, and in some cases pregnant stock, had been purchased during the window of susceptibility for the dams of the current positives, and were regarded as being the potential source of infection. To understand and reduce this risk, herd owners are encouraged to carry out due diligence: ideally sellers should be asked whether BVD has been present in their herd during the previous year and at what stage any Positives were removed. Industry has consistently called for the introduction of BVD herd statuses, to inform farmer purchasing. The commencement of BVD herd restrictions last February has led generally to BVD Positive animals being disposed of in a more timely way, reducing the risk of circulating virus moving out of these herds in transiently infected cattle.

### **Geographical risks**

Recently, the highest levels of disease have been disclosed in the Newry, Armagh and Enniskillen DVO areas, with approximately half of all positive animals being in these locations. During the grazing season, farmers are encouraged to take action to prevent livestock contacts at boundaries with neighbouring cattle, by having either electric or double fencing in place, or by managing grazing alternately in conjunction with neighbouring farmers so as to reduce the risk of virus transmission.

### **Disposing of BVD Positives**

Farmers are encouraged to dispose of BVD Positive calves by getting them euthanised on farm and using licensed routes of disposal. Thorough cleaning and disinfection of areas that could be contaminated with the virus, such as housing, yards, crushes and trailers where BVD Positive animals may have been present, is essential. Any attempt to retain positive calves or to avoid culling them can put multiple farms at risk. BVD Positives, including those with no clinical signs of disease, shed enormous amounts of virus and present a significant risk to other cattle on their holding as well as to cattle on neighbouring premises, so their prompt identification and disposal is key to control.

Note for editors:

1. AHWNI is responsible for the delivery of the Northern Ireland Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Eradication Scheme. For more information on the operation of the Scheme, please contact AHWNI (email [info@animalhealthni.com](mailto:info@animalhealthni.com), tel. 028 7963 9333) or visit the AHWNI website [www.animalhealthni.com](http://www.animalhealthni.com).