



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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BVD border vigilance urged ahead of 2026 calving season

AHI and AHWNI urge farmers to be BVD aware

Animal Health Ireland (AHI) and Animal Health and Welfare Northern Ireland (AHWNI) are jointly urging farmers along the border region to increase vigilance and strengthen biosecurity measures.

The unified call comes following a recent rise in Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) infection levels in herds across **Counties Armagh, Tyrone, Fermanagh and Monaghan.**

The organisations have launched a joint awareness campaign “*It Could Be In Your Area – Be BVD Aware!*” highlighting the importance of protecting herds ahead of the 2026 calving season. Both AHI and AHWNI warn that while significant progress has been made towards BVD eradication on the island of Ireland, the emergence of localised infection clusters is a serious concern.

BVD is a highly contagious disease that damages herd health, reduces fertility, and impacts farm profitability. Preventing reintroduction and spread depends on maintaining strict biosecurity and taking early action when cases arise.

The joint campaign outlines three clear steps for farmers:

1. **Keep It Out!** Buy animals from lower risk herds (herds that have tested negative for at least a year), isolate new arrivals, strongly consider vaccination, and control visitor and vehicle movements.
2. **Fence It Out!** Maintain secure boundaries and prevent direct contact with neighbouring herds.
3. **Stamp It Out!** Identify and remove Persistently Infected (PI) animals promptly and work closely with your veterinary practitioner to resolve the outbreak.

Minimise the chance of disease spread by maintaining good hygiene and avoiding sharing of equipment and facilities.

Dr **Maria Guelbenzu**, BVD Programme Manager at Animal Health Ireland, said: “BVD, like many infectious diseases, does not respect borders. We are urging all farmers in the border counties to take extra care. While farmers have made huge progress towards BVD eradication, the persistence of infection in a few areas shows how easily the virus can re-emerge. Early action and robust biosecurity are essential to protect herds and livelihoods.”

Dr **Sam Strain**, CEO of Animal Health and Welfare Northern Ireland, added: “Substantial progress has been made towards eradicating BVD. However, recently, we have seen an increase in BVD cases in some border areas. It is essential that farmers on both sides of the border continue to work together. By following practical steps now, we can protect the progress made and move closer to eliminating BVD.”

Both organisations reaffirm their shared commitment to a coordinated, science-based approach to animal health and welfare across Ireland and Northern Ireland.

****ENDS****

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For further information:

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