

BVD Herd Restrictions 1st February 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the changes?

Immediate restriction of a herd and any associated herds will occur when a BVD Positive (BVDP) or BVD Inconclusive (BVDI) test result is disclosed.

All movements into or out of restricted herds will be prohibited except for movements:

- to slaughter, of BVD tested animals
- for disposal as an animal by-product
- under Departmental licence, for example, for welfare reasons or to allow a breeding bull into a herd when there is a genuine reason.

From a date to be decided by DAERA, in newly disclosed BVDP herds, females aged 365 days and over will be individually restricted from 21 days after the date that the last BVDP has been removed from the herd. Breeding females will not be restricted individually in herds where an initial BVD Positive has had a Negative result on a follow up test, or where there were only BVD Inconclusive results.

Why are these changes being made?

BVD is recognised as being one of the costliest endemic diseases of cattle in Northern Ireland. The local cattle industry has been committed to eradicating the disease. Prompt identification and removal of BVD Persistently Infected cattle are essential elements of BVD control and it is also vital that circulating BVD virus is confined to affected herds. Herd restrictions are a necessary control measure in that they reduce the risk of the virus moving into purchasing or neighbouring herds via either BVD Persistently Infected or Transiently Infected cattle.

In the ROI, herd restrictions have been a very effective tool in driving down the incidence of BVD. Scotland also uses herd restrictions in its BVD Programme. Following a public consultation by DAERA, BVD Herd Restrictions were introduced in February 2025, with reducing grace periods. From February 2026 they are being applied immediately in an effort to ensure that the virus cannot move out of these herds, in order to accelerate progress towards eradication.

At some point in the future, to be decided by DAERA, breeding females will be restricted because it is known that pregnant stock in a breakdown herd are at risk of passing the virus to the foetus that they are carrying, with the risk of that foetus then becoming a Persistently Infected calf.

How can I release a restricted animal?





Restrictions will be lifted when 2 conditions are met:

1. **For BVDPs**, 21 days have passed since the last BVDP animal has been removed from the herd and associated herds (that is, the BVDP animal has either been culled or re-tested with a BVD Negative result)
For BVDIs, the animal has been culled, or has re-tested BVD Negative
2. All animals in the herd and associated herds, except untested animals less than 31 days old, have

a negative BVD status (BVDN or INDINEG status).

Please note that if a further BVDP is disclosed in a herd, 21 days must also elapse after its death or after a Negative re-test before herd restrictions will be lifted.

After individual female restrictions have been introduced, they will be in place until one of the following conditions is met:

Condition	Reason	
i. 41 weeks have elapsed since the <u>last</u> BVDP animal was removed from the herd	Allows time for a full pregnancy to elapse	
ii. Until a calf born after the lifting of herd restrictions has a BVD Negative result	Provides proof that the calf carried was not infected	
iii. Where the animal had a Positive BVD antibody test within the previous 12 months and before the insemination preceding its current gestation	Proves that the animal had immunity to BVD before the start of the pregnancy	
iv. Where the animal has a Negative BVD antibody test sample taken at least 21 days after the day on which the last BVD Positive animal was removed from the herd	Proves that the animal has not produced a response to a BVD infection, therefore cannot be a Trojan	

What actions should I take if my herd has a BVD breakdown?

- Discuss your breakdown with your own vet and contact AHWNI if you have questions.
- Take steps to stamp out the virus within your herd: isolate suspected cases promptly; cull PIs quickly.
- Clean and disinfect areas where affected calves were present.
- Ensure that the death of a BVDP or BVDI animal is notified to DAERA.
- Take action to protect your herd in the future (consider vaccination).
- Check that all animals in your herd and any associated herds have a negative BVD status. BVDU status cattle should be tested, through the use of a supplementary tag or following blood sampling by your private vet.
- Test calves promptly after birth.
- Encourage others to follow the guidance and to cull BVDPs at the earliest opportunity.