

BVD restriction changes – dealing with the consequences



With new BVD movement restrictions in place on breakdown herds and on individual females in those herds over 12 months of age, for those in BVD breakdown situations it's important to know that there are several ways in which the restrictions may be lifted.

During the last year, the level of retention of BVD positives has been low, so the amount of virus circulating should be decreasing, according to Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI). However the risk of the virus spreading is high in any herd that has had a positive result and so the purpose of the new restrictions is to limit the amount of damage that could be done to other herds.

Herd level derestrictions





Herd level restrictions will be lifted when 2 conditions are met:

1. For BVD Positive (BVDP) animals, 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 BVD Inconclusives (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).

Once herd level restrictions have been removed, there are several ways in which the individual restrictions may be lifted.

Individual level derestrictions

The individual female restrictions will be in place until one of the following conditions is met:

i. For 41 weeks after the last BVDP animal is removed from the herd.	
ii. Until a calf born after the lifting of herd restrictions has a BVD Negative result.	
iii. Where the animal had a Positive BVD antibody test within the previous 12 months and before the insemination preceding its current gestation.	
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.	

- If you have individually restricted cows or heifers, the first step is to assess how far on in calf they are and therefore how quickly they could be derestricted after calving.

- If you need to sell stock more quickly, getting your vet to take a blood sample for antibody testing may be most appropriate. Where BVD antibody testing has been carried out, the required results have been returned and the correct documents supplied to AHWNI, AHWNI will then inform DAERA that the required criteria have been met and will recommend derestriction.

Preventing future breakdowns

The emergence of new outbreaks has frequently been linked to the introduction of new stock to a herd. In breakdown herds that have not introduced cattle and where there was no contact with cattle from other herds during the susceptible window for infection (that is, between the first and fourth month of pregnancy), the key risk may have been from contaminated material being moved on to farms on equipment or people. Thorough cleaning and disinfection of pens, areas and equipment used by BVD Positive calves is essential, to reduce the risk of virus spread within the farmyard and also to reduce the chance of the virus being moved off the farm. In herds that are free from BVD infection, responsible sourcing of calves, good biosecurity, appropriate use of vaccines, and an insistence on visitor hygiene will reduce the risk of the virus being introduced.

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, tel. 028 7963 9333) or visit the AHWNI website www.animalhealthni.com.