



**Animal Health  
& Welfare NI**

**Press Release**

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**Border communities urged to help “finish the job” on BVD ahead of landmark all-island meeting**

*AHI and AHWNI call for final collective push towards BVD freedom*

Farmers and livestock stakeholders in border communities are being encouraged to support the final push towards BVD freedom ahead of the first major all-island public meeting on the disease later this month.

Animal Health Ireland (AHI) and Animal Health and Welfare Northern Ireland (AHWNI) are jointly urging farmers, vets and industry stakeholders to engage with efforts to eliminate Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) as the island moves closer than ever to achieving disease freedom.

Recently published all-island BVD maps highlighted that while incidence levels are now very low overall, a small number of localised areas continue to experience higher rates of infection. Counties Armagh and Fermanagh in Northern Ireland, along with Monaghan in Ireland, remain among the areas where continued focus and collaboration can help drive further progress.

The first major all-island public meeting on BVD will take place on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May at 8pm in the Tommy Makem Centre, Keady. The event, jointly hosted by AHI and AHWNI, will bring together farmers, veterinary representatives and programme leads to discuss the current position, share experiences and outline practical actions that can support disease eradication efforts.

**BVD Programme Manager at AHI, Dr Maria Guelbenzu said:**

“We are now entering the final stages of the journey towards BVD freedom and experience internationally shows that the last steps can often be the most challenging. The remaining pockets of infection require a concentrated effort and close collaboration from everyone involved.

“Farmers have already delivered huge progress and now we need one final collective push to remove the virus from every part of the island. The all-island maps demonstrate how valuable shared information can be in helping us understand where risks remain and where additional engagement can make the greatest difference.”

**Programmes Manager at AHWNI, Sharon Verner said:**

“BVD does not recognise county boundaries or borders and that is why working together is so important. The progress achieved in Northern Ireland and Ireland has been significant, but maintaining momentum at this stage is crucial.

“This meeting is an opportunity for farmers and industry stakeholders to hear directly from those working on the programme, ask questions and discuss practical steps that can help protect farms and neighbouring herds.”

The public meeting is open to all interested stakeholders and attendees will have an opportunity to hear updates from programme representatives, ask questions and take part in discussions on the next steps towards achieving BVD freedom across the island.

**ENDS**