



Gwaredu **BVD**

Gwaredu BVD Programme

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This project has received funding through the Rural Development Plan for Wales which is funded by the Welsh Government and the European Union. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means without the prior written consent of the company. Whilst all reasonable care has been taken in its preparation, no warranty is given as to its accuracy, no liability accepted for any loss or damage caused by reliance upon any statement in or omission from this publication.

What is Bovine Viral Diarrhoea?

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) is a viral disease of cattle that can have a profound welfare effect on the herd. BVD is a pestivirus in the same family as classical swine fever. It causes reduced immunity in cattle. BVD is an economically expensive disease that has an impact on welfare and productivity.

The consequences of disease being present on the farm can be severe and efforts should be focused on removing the disease or preventing it entering the herd.

What affect does it have on the herd?

Once BVD has entered the farm, the impact of the disease includes abortion, infertility, deformed calves and poor health of the herd, particularly the calves.

It is common to see increased cases of calf pneumonia in herds infected with BVD and those affected do not respond well to treatment and have poorer survival rates. The effects on growth rates and fertility are frequently under estimated.

The presence of BVD is associated with increased occurrence of other diseases on the farm increasing the amount of treatments administered. Removing BVD and reducing the risk of associated diseases will reduce the amount of veterinary medicines that need to be bought.

There is no treatment for BVD and culling of Persistently Infected (PI) animals is the only appropriate strategy once infection is found on the farm.

Persistently infected (PI) animals

PI animals are central to BVD. They shed large amounts of virus throughout their lives which infects naïve animals. Their presence on the farm compromises the health of the entire herd as all animals have to direct energy to fight off the disease rather than directing it towards growth and milk production.

PI animals occur when a cow is exposed to the BVD virus while she is pregnant. If this occurs between day 45 and 120 of pregnancy the unborn calf is unable to fight off the infection and becomes persistently infected.

It is likely that 1-2% of animals within an infected herd are PIs. To stop the disease spreading these animals must be identified and culled.

Economics of BVD

BVD has a significant economic impact on farms. Studies have estimated that the loss to a 100 cow beef farm is £4,500 per year or £15,000 per year for a 130 cow dairy herd where the infection is present.

How are cattle infected?

BVD virus is spread by;

- The presence of a PI animal on farm.
- Nose to nose contact between cattle infected with the virus and cattle that have never experienced the disease.
- Transmission from the infected pregnant dam to the unborn calf – creates a persistently infected (PI) animal
- Semen from infected bulls
- Indirect contact with contaminated slurry, overalls, trailers etc

The purchase of infected animals is probably the most common way the disease is introduced to a farm. Once in the herd, the infection is maintained by the virus infecting other adult cattle as well as creating persistently infected (PI) animals.





Preventing disease getting onto the farm

Preventing disease getting onto the farm is the best way of reducing or eliminating the impact of disease on any farm. A relatively small investment in biosecurity and quarantine will not only bring major health benefits to the herd but also reduce the costs associated with treating disease.

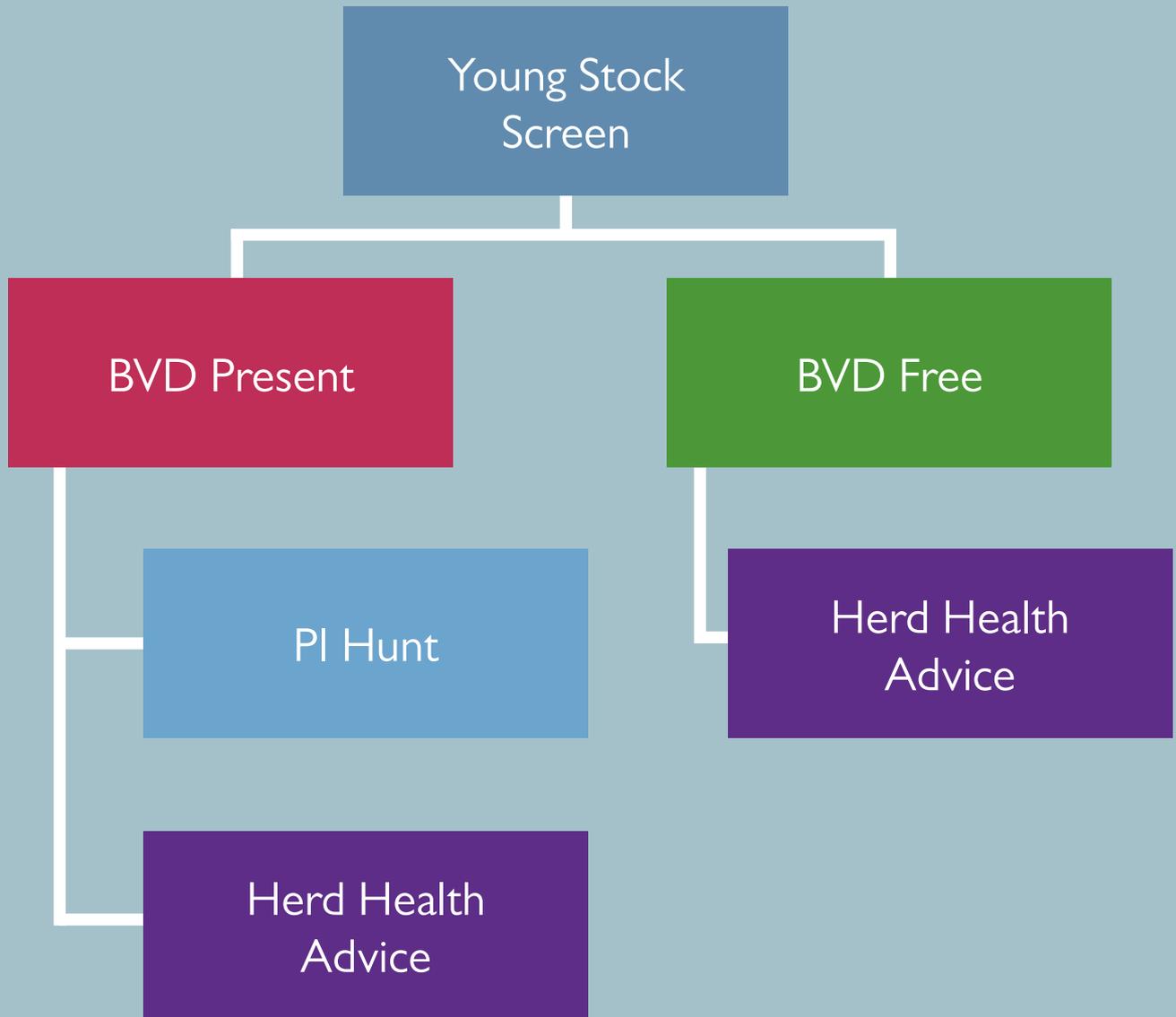
Vaccination for BVD is one of the most important biosecurity tools available and should be discussed with your vet.

A full quarantine protocol can be complex depending on the diseases that are of interest. Your vet should be involved in the planning of any protocol for bringing in new animals to the farm.

IMPORTANT POINTS

- Have good boundary fences to prevent nose to nose contact with neighbouring stock
- Source your animals from BVD free herds
- Quarantine all incoming stock as recommended by your vet by holding in isolation from existing farm stock
- Request that visitors to your farm are free of mud and muck from other farms – this includes their vehicles/trailers

National eradication programme



Gwaredu **BVD**

Gwaredu BVD is a new national programme to eradicate BVD in Wales.

Similar programmes are underway in Scotland and Ireland enabling farmers to eliminate the disease from their farms and reduce the risk of purchasing the virus either through the purchase of a PI animal or an animal that has just become infected.

How will the scheme work?

Gwaredu BVD testing programme - initial testing is free

The herd status will be checked by;

- Testing 5 unvaccinated youngstock between 9 and 18 months of age from each management group
- The blood samples will be collected by your vet and can be done during TB test or other routine visits
- Results will be returned to you in approximately 72 hours
- Gwaredu BVD will support testing for Cattle Health Certification Standards schemes (CHeCS)



Interpreting results following a Gwaredu BVD test

Youngstock samples tested negative

- All youngstock samples tested negative
- Animals have not been exposed to the virus
- Advice will be given on how to keep the herd free from BVD. This will include biosecurity and quarantine advice and whether vaccination is appropriate for you

Youngstock samples tested positive

If at least one out of five youngstock test positive a PI hunt is required. This will be done through a combination of;

- Blood sampling all animals in groups that have shown BVD infection
- Tag and test new calves born on the farm
- Testing milk samples (on dairy farms)

Any PIs identified need to be culled as they are acting as a reservoir for the disease.

Planning the most suitable approach for each farm requires a discussion with your vet. Advice will also be given on biosecurity and quarantine practices to minimise new sources of infection entering the farm.

How to get involved?

- Ask your vet to test.
- Ask your vet for the results.
- Work with your vet to promote and protect your herd health.

For any more information contact the Gwaredu BVD team on:

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