

# ADVANCE

cattle health scheme

## BVD—Bovine Viral Diarrhoea



BVD is caused by a virus, bovine viral diarrhoea virus (BVDV).

The outcome of infection with the virus is related to several factors, including the virus strain, the age, immune status and stage of production of the affected cattle and also whether other infectious diseases are present in the herd.

Common clinical problems include:

- ◆ Suppression of the immune system, hence infected cattle are prone to other infections. This is a major reason the virus has such a marked negative impact on herd health.
- ◆ Acute diarrhoea in adult cattle
- ◆ Increase in calf scour and pneumonia
- ◆ Fertility problems, including failure to conceive, abortion and birth defects. Infected bulls can shed virus in their semen

Calves born to cows infected during early pregnancy can be persistently infected (PI) with the virus. Persistently infected calves are often 'poor do-ers' and frequently go on to develop Mucosal Disease and die during the first year or two of life.

- ◆ **Purchasing PI cattle (possibly as an unborn calf in a bought in cow) is the most important way route by which infection is introduced into a herd.**
- ◆ PI calves are the main source of infection for other cattle in the herd.

### Cost details

Outbreak in naïve dairy farm £83/cow (Bennett & Mawhinney, 1999)

On-going infection in herd—Dairy £31/cow/yr Beef £35/cow/yr (Gunn 2000, 2004)

### Guide to Sampling

Tests for both antibody and virus are available - consult your veterinary surgeon as to which cattle in your herd should be tested when. Testing strategies have been developed to identify whether a herd is infected with BVDV, then to assist in disease eradication.

If clinical disease due to BVDV is found to be a major issue in your herd, vaccinating the adult cattle with a killed vaccine and then monitoring the young stock for evidence of infection is a practical option to control the problem and work towards freedom from disease.



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