



Following the launch of 'BVDFree England', we spoke to specialist cattle vet Keith Cutler, from XL Vet's Endell Vet Group, about Bovine Viral Diarrhoea and the scheme to eradicate it.

Scheme should see England BVD free by 2022

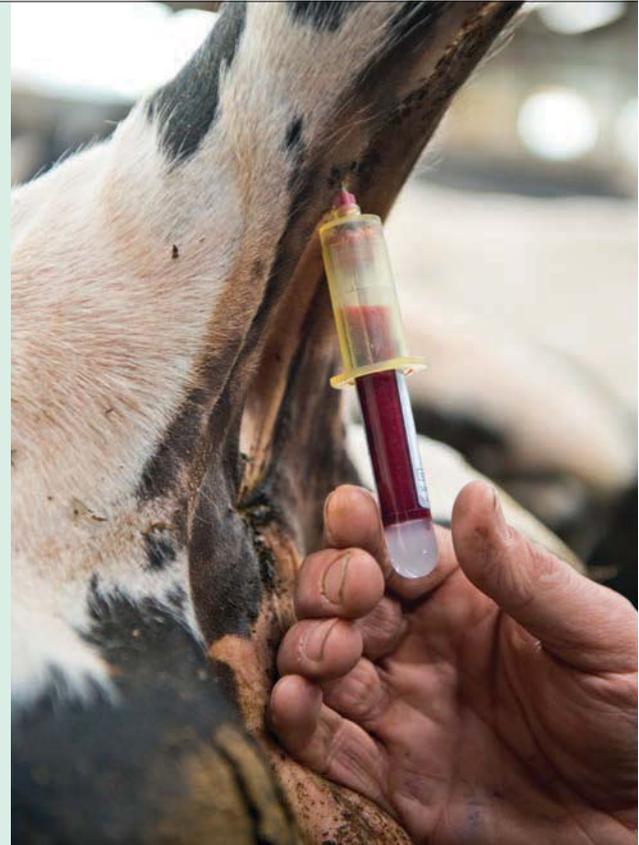
Culling PIs is vital

This summer's launch of the BVDFree England scheme means that the country's herds should be free of the disease by 2022. Similar schemes are in place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, so the ultimate aim will be to join them up to give the UK BVD-free status.

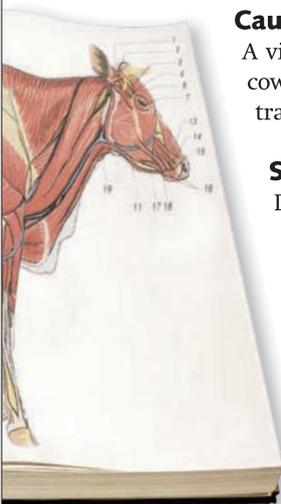
It's impossible to ignore a disease that's estimated to cost the industry more than £61 million each year and interest in, and 'uptake' of BVD testing, has been good.

Estimates are that more than 90% of UK dairy herds have been exposed to BVD. It's an insidious disease and often missed because its symptoms can be attributed to other management factors or health problems. Health and fertility problems can be exacerbated by – if not attributed to – BVD. A severe outbreak of calf pneumonia or scours, for example, could be the result of a BVD infection in the herd. Naive herds, which have never been exposed to BVD, face the biggest threat. If it gets into the herd it spreads quickly – and quietly. So robust biosecurity protocols are vital.

Key to the success of the scheme is identifying persistently infected (PI) animals. PI calves and cows will shed huge amounts of the virus every day and put other animals in the herd at serious risk. It's easier to cull when the PI animal in question is unwell, but all too often she'll be healthy and productive. And these are the dangerous PIs as producers are often reluctant to remove them from the herd. But I really can't stress enough just how important it is that all PI animals are culled. It's the starting point for any BVD management and control programme. Vaccinating programmes and biosecurity will be undermined if producers are not tackling the source of infection.



The encyclopaedia **Bovine Viral Diarrhoea**



Causes

A viral infection, easily passed from cow to cow or cow to calf. The main route of transmission is respiratory.

Symptoms

Difficult to spot, but signs include reduced fertility, poor milk production and increased susceptibility to other infections, particularly in young stock.

Any persistently infected (PI) calves that are born will develop mucosal disease and typically die.

Diagnosis

Milk bulk tank tests can offer a whole-herd picture. NML offers

such a service and can use bulk milk samples already collected through the payment testing route. Any suspect cows and calves should be blood tested.

Prevention

Bio-security, where practical and possible, will help. And vaccination is a must in naive herds where a threat or infected animal is identified. All PIs must also be identified quickly and culled to prevent spread.

Treatment

There is no treatment. All PIs must be culled, and vaccination and stringent biosecurity, to prevent new infection from entering the herd, are the only ways to protect the rest of the herd.

➤ For more information about BVD, and the BVDFree Scheme and how to join, visit www.bvdfree.org.uk.