

New campaign to help fight BVD

A NEW initiative concerning one of the most devastating diseases affecting the cattle industry, bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD), has been launched in England and Wales.

Farming Against BVD includes an independent survey which aims to gain a clearer insight into this complex, confusing disease by seeking the views of farmers in England and Wales.

An expert panel, headed by Professor Joe Brownlie, from the Royal Veterinary College and chairman of the BVD scientific and technical working group, will

then come together to analyse the findings, using them to shape and drive an industry response.

Prof Joe Brownlie says: "BVD is a costly and complex disease, spread by a pestivirus which affects the reproductive and immune systems. Persistently infected (PI) animals are the main source of infection, but can be hard to identify without testing.

"Only total eradication will prevent the disease from spreading. Eradication Schemes in a number of European countries have already succeeded and Scotland and Ireland have embarked on similar

schemes. The information being gathered will help the industry to develop a much needed scheme for England and Wales."

The campaign has been initiated by Novartis Animal Health in partnership with key industry bodies, and results from the survey are due to be announced in the spring.

Joining Prof Brownlie on the expert panel will be Dr Peter Nettleton (Moredun Research Institute), Mansel Raymond (dairy farmer and chairman of the NFU dairy board), Caroline Dawson (Novartis Animal Health veterinary surgeon) and Paddy Gordon (vet).