



Tackling BVD together

by
Dr Elizabeth Berry,
DairyCo

Estimates suggest that BVD costs the UK beef and dairy industries around £40 million a year. BVD is a viral disease transmitted by contact between infected and uninfected cattle. It can cause a wide variety of problems on farms ranging from fertility issues and poor production to abnormalities in calves.

That's why a new industry group is being put together, supported by RDPE funding. The initial aim of the group is to raise awareness of BVD and develop a way forward for the industry to tackle it by implementing a sustained programme of knowledge transfer. The group will then help to shape an industry led BVD eradication programme that goes beyond 2014. DairyCo is managing the delivery of the RDPE contract which includes meeting the milestones that are set by Defra as well as creating awareness for the BVD eradication programme.

NFU livestock board vice chairman Bill Mellor has been appointed as the new chair for the BVD stakeholder group. Having experienced BVD in his herd Mr Mellor is well aware of the impact it can have and knows what a challenge it can be.

It is important that farmers are aware of their BVD status. Farmers need to ask the status of any animals they are buying into their herd, as it is essential to know that the new animals are BVD free. The fact that the animals are vaccinated or tested does not mean they are BVD free. If you have BVD within the herd you should take appropriate advice on detection of any infected animals and control measures to implement - the best person to talk to is your vet.

A 15-month knowledge transfer campaign is starting with a series of train the trainer events for vets and briefings for other livestock advisers. These events will raise awareness of the diseases, with a particular emphasis on best practice in terms of diagnosis, prevalence and treatment. XLVets will take the lead on delivering to vets.

Vets will subsequently work with farmers on local disease control programmes and discuss how appropriate control strategies, including diagnostics and treatments, could be implemented to benefit all farmers in a specific area.

If you are a vet and are interested in finding out more please contact Sophie Throup at 01765 608489 or email to

action@bvdcontrol.co.uk