

BVD zero

A campaign to promote the control and prevention of BVD in cattle

A BVD naïve herd – a good or bad thing?

In a talk at the British Cattle Veterinary Society annual congress (October 2014), vet Jonathan Statham pushed Defra speaker Christine Middlemiss on a BVD eradication programme for England.

Mr Statham, from Bishopton Vet Group which is a member of XL Vets, wanted to understand what English producers needed to do in order to catch up with neighbouring countries who were well on their way to eradicating BVD.

The guidance was the English veterinary and farming community needed to be consistent and more cohesive in presenting one strategy for control instead of the fragmented situation which is currently seen.

“Different systems have different requirements, and any thoughts we do develop must cover all options.

“Many Nordic countries have, in a way, ‘trials’ BVD control for the rest of

us and, although they may sometimes reflect quite different farming systems, we can still learn much from their experiences,” Mr Statham says.

The fight to eradicate BVD in Denmark started in 1994 with a voluntary national programme. Similar programmes were undertaken in Norway and Sweden and the region is now classified BVD free.

National approach

BVD control in France and The Netherlands has been patchy, while German producers and vets have worked hard to develop a national approach.

“Adherence to the schemes in Scotland and Ireland has generally been good, but it is interesting to note just prior to the end of 2014, only 2,388 of the 7,300 Irish herds which had participated in the voluntary phase qualified for Negative Herd Status.

“Of these, 630 have been advised they do not qualify due to the presence of PIs in the herd,” he says.



Jonathan Statham: cover all options.

“When examining different schemes, some advise tissue testing, others different forms of surveillance and the advice on vaccination can also be variable.”

Mairead Wallace-Pigott of Millstreet Veterinary Group, Cork, Ireland, who sees producers heading towards BVD eradication in their herds, says: “Look forward a year or two. Routine herd monitoring will continue in all herds, the Department of Agriculture database will allow us to track animals and monitor imports. PIs will be removed promptly.

“What then for our national herd as we head towards being BVD free? By BVD free, do we mean BVD naïve? In some countries and regions – the Nordic area for example – this is the case. Testing, culling,

strict biosecurity, minimal live imports and a ‘no vaccination’ policy have resulted in a BVD naïve national herd.

“Being naïve to a virus means should an animal become exposed, the effects could be severe and devastating for the herd. Will Ireland, and later England, cease importing stock from mainland Europe and the UK where attitudes to BVD control programmes and pre-movement testing vary? Will we all double-fence fields, quarantine moved and bought-in stock and act immediately on test results?

“Our high stocking densities, regular stock movement and trading patterns mean being BVD naïve could leave us open to sudden and devastating BVD breakdowns,” she says.

“Speak to your vet and develop a plan specifically for your herd.

“In many cases, this will include an effective BVD vaccination programme with a simple-to-follow vaccine protocol supported by a solid biosecurity plan.”