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Database for bovine viral diarrhoea status up and running

A leading vet group has launched a web-based database to help calf buyers check the bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) status of the animals.

The database – which is fully-accessible and web-based – has been launched by XLVets as a central part of its BVD Check Tag initiative, which uses branded white ear tags as part of a status testing procedure. These tags show an animal has been tested for BVD and provide an easily identifiable and highly visible prompt for calf buyers to check results online before purchase.



With the initiative – sponsored by MSD Animal Health – backed by the 53-strong UK-wide group of XLVets veterinary practices, the main aims of BVD Check Tag are to improve the identification of source farms and reduce the risks of persistently infected (PI) calves moving from unit to unit, hopefully "stemming the spread of the disease."

Dan Humphries, from the XL Vets' practice Lambert, Leonard and May, said: "BVD is primarily spread by PIs, which are calves born from cows infected with BVD.

"These PI calves often appear normal, but will spread infection to other cattle they come into contact with. It's therefore critical we remove these animals from the breeding herd and also ensure they are not sold into other herds.

"By identifying PIs, ideally shortly after birth and certainly before they move from their home unit, we can minimise the spread of BVD and also offer more targeted control programmes in herds that are identified as infected."

The BVD Check Tag scheme is voluntary. Once calves are tagged and the tissue samples analysed, results are recorded via the farm's veterinary practice on to the new database. This online database – which in future will be accessible from any smartphone through an app – will then provide verification of all calves testing negative through the scheme.

Mr Humphries continued: "The scheme is being piloted on a significant scale through XLVets member practices, but any farmer – not only clients of XLVets practices – will be able to access the database from the outset.

"The ultimate aim is that all practices will have the option of participating in the scheme, with the database being hosted independently, thereby allowing the branded white tag to become a universal symbol to promote BVD awareness and prompt positive action to remove PIs."

For more information, visit the scheme's website. (<http://www.xlvets.co.uk/content/bvd-free>)