

BVD Zero

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

Plan vaccine timings to help protected stock

Despite the fact we are still in the depths of muddy, cold winter, it is time to start planning for spring turnout and, with that, comes the annual headache of scheduling all the required vaccines and treatments today's dairy or suckler cow undergoes in a year.

Here, vets Jon Reeder from Synergy Farm Health in Dorset and Den Leonard from Shropshire-based Lambert, Leonard and May, both part

of the XL Vet Group, compare and contrast their clients' implementation of BVD control programmes.

A recent study on 71 farms throughout the UK revealed a third of farmers never refer to the vaccine product database. A worrying 21 per cent vaccinated using the wrong dose or incorrect route of administration. All farms in the study administered two doses in the primary vaccination course, but 48 per cent gave these at the incorrect interval, with just

24 per cent completing the primary vaccination course at the recommended time prior to service.

As prescribed

Mr Reeder says: "Failing to administer the vaccine exactly as prescribed could mean cattle are not protected effectively. Why does this appear to be the case so often and what are the reasons behind it?"

Mr Leonard agrees failure to vaccinate properly is a significant problem and points out working out accurate timings for administering both the primary course and booster is difficult.

"Ensuring the second vaccination of the primary course or the booster is given either four weeks before the start of the next gestation or no less than seven days prior to service, as current vaccines recommend, is really hard in a year-round calving dairy herd or for a suckler herd out with a bull," Mr Leonard says.



Spend time with your vet to work out vaccination timings in order to protect your livestock effectively.

"Add to this the fact sometimes another booster is needed six months later and you find you are quickly grappling with a very complex timetable."

The study also showed during transport, just 10 per cent of farmers had the ability to keep vaccine chilled; during refrigeration on farm, only 11 per cent of farmers reported using a thermometer to monitor temperature; and during use 33 per cent attempted to keep the vaccine cool. Further risks for

inactivation or deterioration of vaccine were through contamination, identified in 13 per cent, and through open bottles of vaccine being kept longer than 10 hours, longer than a month on 34 per cent of farms.

Advice

What advice would both vets give producers worried about what to do when?

Mr Leonard says: "Spend some time with your vet working out what animal needs what

vaccine or treatment when and then stick to that as best you can. Our clients are also able to utilise our VetTech service, removing some of the stress involved."

Mr Reeder adds: "Good record-keeping and a defined standard operating procedure or protocol makes it easier for everyone involved and should minimise workload while, at the same time, optimise your chance of getting everything right."



Jon Reeder



Den Leonard