

LEGISLATION IS VITAL IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BVD IN THE UK



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* BVD has been successfully eradicated from a number of EU countries and national control programmes are well established in various member states. Common themes of successful national programmes include:

- * A robust database
- * Government support including legislation
- * Energetic and inclusive veterinary-led knowledge exchange programmes.

This is typified in the contrasting

fortunes between Danish and Dutch schemes. Government support, both financial and legislative, has been highly significant in the success of Scandinavian and Swiss BVD eradication schemes. However, the UK cattle industry has a different relationship with government, especially in the current economic climate as well as culturally.

A strong livestock sector plays a vital role for society – we need to feed ourselves. The government should support BVD eradication in acknowledgement of its policy obligation to fund services that are for the public good.

Safeguarding national food security is a benefit to society, as the national herd becomes more productive. Additionally

the commercial/economic effect of eradicating BVD on farm is increasingly combined with removing barriers to international trade. Ireland and Scotland are already pursuing national BVD programmes in addition to bovine TB control, along with other EU partners.

The British Cattle Veterinary Association has been developing a proposal with the NFU, AHDB and Cattle Health Certification Standards for a not-for-profit industry animal health and welfare delivery body for England with a strategy for long-term improvement. This body has been proposed as Animal Health England.

The core objective would be focused on improving the health

status of the national cattle herd, via this delivery body facilitating and developing collaborative partnerships between government, industry and wider stakeholders, to oversee and implement a range of projects. Reducing duplication of effort and cost to both the farmer and taxpayer is a key objective.

Although voluntary schemes are hugely valuable in leading the way, ultimately the less progressive herds will halt progress. Legislation to support regular and strategic BVD monitoring and compulsory removal of PIs is vital to sit alongside risk-based trading and genuine veterinary herd health management if we are to achieve the huge benefits promised by BVD eradication.