

One-shot vaccine boasts improved control over BVD

By Sarah Alderton

A bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) vaccine that only requires one shot and protects cattle against BVD type 1 and 2 has been launched.

Bovela, from Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, will be available to farmers from the start of April.

It could help make the management and control of BVD easier due to its one-shot dose, which can be used in cattle from three months of age and also when pregnant.

Currently, other BVD vaccines require a two-dose primary course with boosters annually or even every six months. It is this feature that Allan Henderson of Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica claims will

have a positive influence on BVD control.

"BVD remains the most common viral disease affecting cattle throughout Europe, despite vaccines being available for more than 15 years."

Vet Keith Cutler, Endell Vet Group agrees the new one dose vaccine will make it easier for farmers to comply with vaccine regimes and will be more convenient for farmers to use.

"This is a live vaccine, which is always a worry, but because it has had two genes removed it is not pathogenic and it doesn't cross the placenta.

"A live vaccine is good at stimulating the immune system so farmers don't need to give two doses,



TIM SPRENER

BVD is spread in herds through persistently infected animals.

which is helpful as compliance regimes for the two dose vaccines are often very poor.

"This one-dose vaccine will mean there is less scope for vaccination regimes to go wrong."

Mr Cutler also welcomes the fact the vaccine covers type one and type 2 BVD, adding: "There is

increasing prevalence of type two BVD in Europe, with 70-80% mortality seen on some veal units in Belgium.

"When you look at how many dairy cows we are importing from countries such as Belgium, it's only a matter of time before we see BVD in the UK."

However, Mr Cutler says the one drawback with the new vaccine is the cost, with the product twice

as expensive as the other two dose vaccines available.

Bovela also requires an annual booster.

BVD is spread within herds and to new herds through the presence of persistently infected (PI) animals. PIs can look relatively healthy and show no outward signs of infection but, as exposed to the virus as a foetus, have become virus carriers. If they are born alive, they will shed

the virus consistently throughout their lives so perpetuating the cycle of infection.

"The foetal control delivered by Bovela gives absolute confidence that cows will not produce PIs," says Mr Henderson.

About 60% of EU cattle test positive for the virus and, although BVD type 1 is most common, outbreaks of BVD type 2 were confirmed in 2013 and 2014 in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands.

Work has looked at the efficacy of Bovela in preventing the production of PI calves and against type 1 and 2 BVD, as well as confirming its efficacy in young calves as young as three months of age as their natural maternal protection wears off. Trials also confirmed vaccine safety generally and during various stages of pregnancy," he adds.

"Bovela is the first and only vaccine in UK which has been proven to protect cattle from BVD type 1 and 2," Mr Henderson adds.

It has been in development for 17 years and has gained a marketing authorisation following assessment of an unprecedented quantity of data generated in both beef and dairy herds.

Seeking veterinary advice on how to best tackle BVD in your herd is the best starting point.

Farmers Weekly also has a BVD e-learning academy looking at BVD basics and control advice and you can earn CPD DairyPro points, too. Go to www.fwi.co.uk/bvdacademy

Control of BVD depends on understanding farm BVD status, identification and removal of PIs, biosecurity and ongoing monitoring as well as vaccination.

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* See p44 for more information on control of BVD

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