

BVD problem in Scotland looks close to resolution

Why is the BVD situation different in Scotland?

A BVD eradication scheme has been running in Scotland since 2010. The rural economy has a significant influence on politics in Scotland and its government recognised the economic benefit to the country of eradicating arguably the most costly of cattle diseases.

What has the scheme involved to date?

From Sept 2010 to April 2011 a subsidy was available for the screening of all breeding herds to establish their disease status by February 2013. Annual herd screening, by an approved method, is now mandatory. In January 2014 further measures came into place including a ban on knowingly selling/moving cattle infected with BVD virus, restrictions on untested herds/animals and the requirement to declare the herd's BVD status before sale.

BVD ERADICATION

A Scot working south of the border, Katharine Blease, of Bishopston Vets, has followed Scotland's BVD story with interest

What is the current BVD picture in Scotland?

Of the test results received over 82 per cent are now 'negative' with just under 18 per cent 'not negative'. There has been a continual decrease in levels indicating that farmers are taking successful steps to eliminate the disease where found. In total around 1500 persistently infected (PI) animals have been identified and the majority of these are now dead.

What is the next phase of the eradication scheme in Scotland?

From June 1, 2015, new control measures are expected to be introduced to protect herds

from acquiring new infections from brought in animals. You will not be able to move an animal from a 'not negative' herd unless it has been individually tested for BVD virus. Where animals are brought in from outside Scotland it will be a requirement to individually test these animals for the presence of BVD virus within a set period, probably around one month. The purchaser's herd status will be suspended pending the result of this testing.

Will this result in an influx of PI animals into England?

No – it shouldn't. There has been a ban in Scotland on knowingly moving BVD



SCOTTISH MONITOR: Katharine Blease

Given the more stringent measures for 'non negative' herds, Scottish producers will be even more keen to retain their status as negative. This is already leading to a premium for animals of known BVD health status, particularly at northern marts. An excellent way to clearly display that an animal has been BVD tested is to tag calves with the distinctive white BVD Check Tags.

Will there be a national BVD programme in England?

There is hope for a national co-ordinated scheme in England starting spring 2015. A DEFRA and EU funded RDPE initiative has already been running to share consistent messages about BVD control with vets, farmers, industry advisors and field staff and to start to map the occurrence of BVD across the country using consistent processes.

infected cattle since January 2014. Animals that tested positive for virus can be monitored through the cattle tracing system so enabling their move-

Will Scottish producers stop purchasing cattle from England?

ments to be detected.