

Industry marketing award for BVD campaign

A national initiative developed by XLVets member practices has scooped a top industry marketing award at the Veterinary Marketing Association (VMA) Awards.

The Practice Marketing Award, presented to XLVets during an awards ceremony in London on March 13, was for "demonstrating initiative and innovation" in the marketing of BVD Check Tag to farmers.

Stuart Gough of XLVets Calwetton Veterinary Group said: "The BVD Check Tag campaign focuses on one simple message – identify persistently infected animals and remove them from your herd. It offers farmers a simple, cost-effective and practical method of testing for BVD, backed up with veterinary support from practices that have got on board with the scheme."

A national web-based database provides verification of negative test results for the disease.

Stuart explained: "The new database is central to the BVD Check Tag initiative that uses **branded white ear tags** as part of a BVD status testing procedure. The white tags show that an animal has been tested for BVD and provides an **easily identifiable and highly visible prompt** for calf buyers to check test results online before purchase."

A range of marketing tools were developed to support the initiative, including a selection of veterinary practice and livestock market **posters** and a collection of informative **BVD Free fact sheets** to help farmer's better understand and control the disease.

To help generate support for the campaign, XLVets has worked with veterinary practices nationwide to get as many involved as possible to ensure the initiative is a nationwide success.

XLVets farm brand manager **Gemma Ayre** added: "Only with this critical mass and support from livestock markets, tag companies, pharmaceutical suppliers and calf rearers can we ensure the initiative is a success and routine testing for BVD on farms becomes the norm."

- Practices or farmers not yet involved in the BVD Check Tag scheme should visit www.bvdfree.co.uk or call **01228 711788** for further information.



[L-R] Kerrie Winstanley, Gemma Ayre, and Joanne Sharpe from XLVets, Roddy Webster from Merial Animal Health (award sponsor) and awards host Kate Silvertown.