

Appendix 2: Quick Risk Assessment for BVD Virus Introduction in Dairy Herds

Name

Date

Address

Veterinarian

Herd Code Dairy No. Milking Herd Size

1 In: Do any untested or pregnant animals ever come on to the property (e.g. cows, heifers, calves, bulls, freezer beasts)?

Yes

No

2 Out: Are any heifers, cows or carry-over cows away from the home farm during pregnancy?

Yes

No

3 Over: Is contact possible between your cows and cattle from other farms, such as a neighbour's?

Yes

No

4 Do you vaccinate for BVD?

Yes

No

If Yes, which age group(s)?

If any of questions 1, 2 or 3 are answered Yes, this herd is at risk of introducing BVD virus if steps are not taken to mitigate this risk. (Refer to Appendix 4).

Quick Risk Assessment Form Explanations

Question 1

This question aims to determine if it is possible for PI animals to come on to the property unwittingly (**In**).

It is important for the farmer to think of all types of animal that come through the front gate. The biggest challenge is to remember that single animals might only be on the farm for a few weeks; for example, the farmer might be rearing a calf donated by a farmer down the road, with the proceeds going to the local rugby club.

Classes of stock to consider here include:

- extra calves for replacements or for beef/freezer or charities
- extra yearlings or R2 replacements or similar-aged beef animals
- any animal that the farmer has grazed for someone else for any period of time
- cows
- bulls.

The testing refers to viral tests for PI detection.

Vaccination refers to the use of vaccines known to provide good foetal protection.

If the animals are vaccinated but not tested, they could still be PI so this is a risk.

Test-negative pregnant animals are a risk if they were not vaccinated with a good foetal protective vaccine before becoming pregnant. They could have PI foetuses.

Also consider viral introduction via people, as well as their instruments used on animals, vehicles etc.

Question 2

This question is designed to detect the likelihood of PI foetuses developing while animals are off farm, then being born on farm (**Out**).

Any heifer or cow that is off farm at some time during the first 120 days of gestation needs to be considered here.

For a group of cattle, the timeframe for any one animal to become infected must start close to the beginning of the mating period and extend to four months after the end of the mating period. For example, if bulls were taken out of heifers on 1 January, a PI foetus could develop if infection took place on 30 April. Also consider any animal that gets mated at home, but goes off grazing afterwards before the fourth month of pregnancy.

If a farm has a very extended mating period, these extra four months could encompass early winter for a herd that winter grazes off farm. (Note that for a late-born PI calf to be a problem, it would need to be kept or make contact with other stock before leaving the farm – so calves born after the first few weeks of calving may not be a great risk for most herds.)

Question 3

This question is designed to determine the likelihood of the BVD virus spreading from a neighbouring farm(s) (**Over**).

Consider neighbours with any type of cattle (dairy farm, beef cow operations, rearing operations, a small block with a few steers etc).

Answer Yes if nose-to-nose contact is possible at some point on the boundary at some time of the year. Only answer No if you are certain there are no cattle on any of the boundaries, or if all boundaries are double-fenced or well hedged. Also consider contact from cattle on the roadside – either wandering or being driven.

Question 4

This question aims to determine the extent to which vaccination mitigates some of the risks identified in the first three questions. If heifers are fully vaccinated before being mated, with a vaccine that provides good foetal protection, this reduces the risk of PIs being born when they return as R2 heifers.