

“Producers Don’t Plan to Fail, They Fail to Plan.”

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Issues including the cost of feed and pricing changes in the global markets continue to challenge the cattle industry. While those of us in the industry cannot impact the price of corn or our trade issues; we can adjust our operations in order to remain profitable despite these challenges. As a veterinarian, I understand the need to limit or reduce disease to optimize production, yet **Bovine Viral Diarrhea (BVD) is still the most costly viral disease in the United States - costing over 2 billion dollars annually.**

Starting a plan

BVD control starts at the cow calf operation. The virus is spread from animal to animal by close contact through saliva, urine and feces. A positive bull can spread it in his semen. The main source of the virus is known to come from an animal commonly referred to as persistently infected or “PI”. An animal becomes persistently infected when the calf is still in the uterus. If the cow is exposed to BVD virus during the first trimester (40-130 days) a calf can become “PI” and, once born, will shed the virus its entire life and infect other cattle in its proximity. The challenge is PI cattle look healthy in most cases and show no signs of illness. The only way to find PI animals is through testing. **This is where the planning starts. Simply put, when a calf is born, it is either a PI or not.** As cattlemen, we just need to decide when we are going to perform an ear notch test to find this out.

The best time to test for PI is in combination with tagging calves at birth as it discovers PI animals at the earliest point to limit the shedding of the virus. For convenience, ear notch samples can be frozen for 30 days to prevent having to send samples every day during calving. The next best time is at branding, marking, or spring vaccination - ideally BEFORE the bulls are turned out. If the PI calf is identified before breeding, we can actually stop the disease in one year! Waiting till weaning is not ideal because if a PI is found, we’ll know that it has been shedding virus to the whole herd while the bulls were out thus creating a high probability of finding more PI calves in the next year.

What about the cows?

Many people express to me that they thought we just needed to test the cows. This is a misconception. I’ll explain. It is true that a PI cow will always have a PI calf. The problem is that less than 7% of PI calves born come from dams that are PIs themselves! **Most PI calves come from normal cows.** This is because the PI calves roaming around are spreading the infection...not the cows. This is why we focus on the calves. When API performs a herd screening, I like to say we actually provide a two-for-one deal by testing the calves. Why? Because if a calf is negative, we know the cow is negative. Although if a calf tests positive, it is then necessary to test the cow. API recommends that animals who test positive for BVD PI should be eliminated from the herd as there is no cure for a PI animal.

Advancing the plan

Individual identification is necessary when PI testing is performed. While a visual tag is commonly used, API offers a unique EID tag that stores the data on the tag. This is our advanced WriteTAG System. To learn more, please visit www.writetag.com.

BVD control requires a program approach involving testing for PIs, vaccination, and keeping PIs from entering your herd. API is actively working with the seedstock industry to assist in testing to make sure all the valuable animals they sell are BVD PI negative. API's low-cost testing solutions help cattlemen achieve this through a combination of working directly with them along with their veterinarian as part of our service.

We know BVD is a problem that starts at the cow calf level where PIs (persistently infected animals) are created. But it is important to remember that it does not stop there! PIs continue to be associated with increased sickness at the feedyard. Feedlot managers tell us they don't want PI animals on the yard and are willing to pay more to make sure. That is why we see premiums obtained for negative animals at marketing.

What is important to understand here is we have the tools to not only control the disease, but to potentially eradicate BVD. Animal Profiling International, Inc. (API) continues to make efforts in educating the industry on the effects of BVD in addition to providing low-cost testing solutions to cattlemen. API provides technologies to the cattle industry in order to promote management over medicine.

Start Today!

API's advanced technology and low-cost solutions are available to find PI animals and provide operations with the ability to advance their bottom lines by quickly removing them in order to prevent more cattle from being exposed. API has been on the both the farm and ranch and have listened to cattlemen who consistently expressed a need for a quality, cost-effective service to help them find PIs and solve this problem. Through these face-to-face discussions, API has created a solution allowing cattlemen across the United States to see how easy it is to screen their herds at a low-cost and know if BVD is causing them to lose revenue. For more details use the link below to read about sampling and pricing.

http://animalprofiling.com/products_bvd.html

With proper planning before the next calving season, API can tailor the best plan for you to keep BVD from causing problems on your farm or ranch. Call us at Animal Profiling International today to keep BVD from being a drain on your operation.

Make it happen. Start a plan now.

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