

Beef Herd BVD PI Screening Protocol



The screening protocol assists the producer in finding all PI animals in the herd and also assures that new arrivals are BVD PI free. BVD PI screening should be part of a program involving proper vaccination, biosecurity and handling and welfare management.

New entries into herd:

1. Home-raised Yearling Heifers – Heifers should be tested for BVD PI status prior to breeding. If the heifer was tested as a calf and found to be negative there is no need to retest.
2. Purchased Open Heifers – All heifers should be tested before purchasing or before commingling with herd and the start of breeding season.
3. Purchased Bred Heifers or Cows – All heifers or cows with an unknown BVD PI status should be kept separate from the home herd. Calves from these animals must be tested prior to commingling.
4. Bulls – Bulls should be purchased as BVD PI negative. If not, bulls should be tested prior to breeding season. A good time to take an ear notch is when doing breeding soundness exams.

Calves

1. All calves born alive should have an ear notch sample taken. It is important to have a calf identified individually. Ear notches can be frozen for up to 30 days.
 - a. Calving. Earliest opportunity to evaluate status and minimize exposure to herd mates if a positive is found.
 - b. Branding / Marking / First Vaccination. This allows producers to get all of their calves sampled when they are normally working them and prior to breeding.
 - c. Preconditioning / Weaning. This allows producers the ability to know if they have PI calves and can market BVD PI screened animals. This also limits production losses from exposure to a PI if the calves are retained at the ranch. If PI positives are found, all calves should be sampled prior to the next breeding season because PIs have exposed breeding animals.
2. All calves aborted, stillborn or dying should have an ear notch sample taken.
3. All grafted calves purchased should have an ear notch sample taken.

Cows

1. Cows do not need to be sampled if a sample is obtained from their calf and it is negative. This assures that the cow is not a PI. If the calf is PI positive, a sample needs to be taken from the cow to make sure she is not a PI.
2. All open cows retained in the herd should be sampled prior to breeding.
3. Cows that have not calved at the time of sampling calves should be separated. Samples should be taken from their calves.
4. All cows that lose a calf and a sample was not obtained from the calf, should be tested if retained in the herd.