

Dairy Calf BVD PI Screening Protocol



The screening protocol is designed to keep Bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) persistently infected (PI) calves from causing production losses when raising dairy calves. Because BVD virus is immune suppressive, other diseases like scours and respiratory infections can be exaggerated with an underlying BVD infection. Identifying and eliminating PIs early can realize benefits of reduced disease and treatment costs for the operation. Calf rearing facilities will benefit from a total BVD control plan involving testing, proper vaccination, biosecurity and handling and welfare management.

1. All calves should have an ear notch or blood (serum) sample taken on arrival.
2. All calves need to be identified individually and matched to the sample taken.
3. Samples should be sent frequently to the lab for analysis. PI calves shed virus in large amounts continuously and spread the virus to calves in the home row.
4. Positive PI calves should be removed immediately from the home row upon first test.
5. PI positive calves should be isolated in a separate part of the yard. Care should be taken to avoid spreading the virus from these calves to other calves in the yard. These calves should be handled last.
6. A confirmatory sample should be taken from the PI positive calf 3 weeks after original test. If positive, calves should be humanely destroyed. We do not recommend marketing the calf.
7. Negative second test calves were acutely infected and can be returned to the home hutch row. An acute calf is one that was infected with a high level of BVD virus, but was able to clear the infection.
8. Since the PI calf was created during the first trimester of gestation, it is important to inform the dairy about the PI calf. A system should be developed to identify which dairies are sending PI positive calves. Information should be sent to PI positive dairies about ways that they could improve their BVD control program.
9. Animal Profiling International is committed to working with the dairy to assist them in a program designed to stop PIs from limiting production. API has the following tools to assist calf raisers in providing useful information to dairies:
 - a. Calf Ranch BVD PI Monitoring Program – Spreadsheet that calculates PI prevalence by total operation and monthly by dairy.
 - b. BVD PI Positive Fax/Email template – One page sheet that alerts the dairy about a PI positive calf.
 - c. Dairy BVD PI Screening Protocol – Outlines steps needed to eliminate the formation of more PI calves on the dairy.

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