

Dairy Herd BVD Control Plan



The outline below is a plan to help the dairyman identify if there is BVD circulating in the herd and assists in finding animals that are persistently infected (PI) which are the main reservoirs of the virus in many operations. We understand the importance of working closely with the herd veterinarian. BVD PI surveillance and screening should be part of a complete BVD control program involving proper vaccination, biosecurity and good handling and welfare management.

A dairy would work through this control program if physical signs of BVD are present or a PI calf has been diagnosed. If a PI calf is identified, the dam should be located and tested.

STEP 1:

Survey presence of BVD in your milking herd by checking the bulk tank milk.

- If reproductive losses are a problem or PI calves have been identified, string sampling the whole herd should be initiated. Take an initial bulk tank (string sample) sample to determine if a PI cow is present in the milking string. If a positive sample is found follow step 2. After PIs are eliminated from the herd surveillance samples should be done quarterly.
- If bulk tank (string sample) is negative continue on a regular surveillance plan and individually screen new animals into the herd.
- String samples should be used for larger dairies with a maximum of 400 animals per pen.
- Weekly surveillance samples of the fresh heifer/cow pen should be done if frequent outside (unknown background) animals are brought into the herd or herd animals have not been tested PI negative. Testing all new arrivals is an excellent way to keep PIs from entering the milking string.

STEP 2:

If bulk tank/string sample is positive test individual cows using milk, serum or ear notch.

- Test all cows in lactating population or positive string individually to identify PI.
- Test all new entries in to the herd.
 1. Home-raised Heifers – heifers should be tested prior to breeding for BVD PI status. 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 prior to breeding.
 3. Purchased Springers or Cows – All springers or cows with an unknown BVD PI status should be kept separate from the home herd, or tested negative prior to commingling. Newborn calves must also be tested from these animals to assure they are negative for being a PI.
 4. Bulls – Bulls should be purchased as BVD PI tested free. If not, bulls should be tested negative prior exposure to the cows.

STEP 3:

Continued surveillance to keep milking herd and heifers BVD PI negative.

- Test all newborn calves to identify status of calf and dam.
 1. If calf is negative, dam is also negative. If the calf is positive, a sample from the cow must be obtained.
 2. If moving calves to a calf ranch, work with them to develop plan to receive info on calves tested at the calf ranch. If a PI calf is found the dam should be tested and records should be maintained on lactation # along with raised or purchased.
 3. All calves aborted, stillborn or dying should have a sample taken.
 4. All cows (not previously tested) that lose a calf and a sample was not obtained from the calf should be tested.
 5. If testing of all calves is not an option, dry cows should be tested negative before freshening. Once a heifer/cow is tested negative, it does not need to be retested. Even though the calf can still be positive, it keeps the PI heifer/cow out of the milking string.

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