

Dairy Herd BVD PI Screening Protocol



The screening protocol assists dairymen in finding all PI animals in the herd and also assists in keeping the herd BVD PI free. BVD PI screening should be part of a program involving proper vaccination, biosecurity and good handling and welfare management.

New entries into 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.

Calves

1. All calves born alive should have an ear notch or blood sample taken. It is important to have a calf identified individually and know the dam. Ear notches or serum can be frozen for up to 30 days.
 - a. If only heifers are retained and tested, the cows that have bull calves will need to be tested.
 - b. It is ideal to test bull calves before leaving dairy as it determines the status of the dam.
2. All calves aborted, stillborn or dying should have a 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 positive, a sample needs to be taken from the cow to make sure she is not a PI.
2. In small or high-risk herds, it may be cost-effective to take samples from all cows to know that no PIs are present in the milking string. Continued sampling of all calves born and kept on the farm needs to be done to assure the dairy stays BVD PI free.
3. Bulk tank or string sampling may be used to monitor the milking string. Individual testing of cows should be done if a positive sample is found.
4. All cows (not previously tested) that lose a calf and a sample was not obtained from the calf should be tested.