

## Young stock losses lead to BVD been identified in a dairy herd

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### Background

Between August 2015 and beginning January 2016 a 240 Holstein cow dairy herd had seen treatment and mortality rates increased in the group housed pre-weaned calves. Bovine respiratory disease (BRD) and neonatal diarrhea treatment rates were estimated to have increased from 5% to 50% and from 10% to 20% respectively. From farm records pre weaning mortality from May to July 2015 was 3% and 8% in November to December 2015. No increase in abortions or stillbirths was reported.

### Preliminary Indication

On the initial visit, blood samples were collected from neonatal calves to assess passive transfer of colostrum antibodies as this had previously been an issue on this farm. A bulk milk sample was taken and sent for antibody testing as there was no history of BVD vaccination on this farm.

### Further Development

The serum test results that the suggested adequate passive transfer. The bulk milk sample showed high levels of BVD antibodies so antibody samples were taken from 5 animals from a group of young stock. All but one of these returned high results; this individual animal was tested for antigen and was found to be a positive. This animal was culled from the herd.

### Treatment Applied

The following recommendations were made:

1. Screen the rest of the herd for other potential PI animals and remove them from the herd
2. Vaccinate all breeding stock to protect foetuses from effects of BVDv
3. Join Animal Health and Welfare NI BVD Eradication Program

Of these recommendations, two were implemented. Screening the herd to remove any further PI animals was considered too expensive.

### Result

Participation is now compulsory in Northern Ireland for all calves born after 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 so this herd will continue screening as part of this scheme.

### Questions

Q1: What problems were seen on farm to start the investigation?

1. **Increased treatment and mortality rates in pre weaned calves.**
2. Abortions.
3. Fertility issues.

Q2: Which BVD control steps did the farm take?

1. Screening whole herd.
2. **Vaccination of all breeding stock.**
3. Double fencing boundaries.