

Buying in a pregnant heifer resulted in a PI born in a beef herd

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“Buying in a pregnant heifer results in a PI been born in a Scottish Beef herd.”

Background

A beef herd which had previously been considered free of BVD was found to have a positive young stock check test in 2012.

Preliminary Indication

It was considered how this exposure to BVD could have occurred, possibilities included exposure ‘over the fence’ or a PI been present in the herd. Over the fence contact was ruled out so a PI hunt was initiated. One PI calf was identified.

Further Development

The PI calf was born to a bought in animal. In 2011 a group of heifers were brought on to the farm they were screened for BVD antigen and all found to be virus negative. Their stage of gestation was unknown but on arrival they were vaccinated with an inactivated BVD vaccine. Unfortunately no consideration was given to the risk of one of them carrying a PI calf or being a ‘Trojan Horse’.

Treatment Applied

In retrospect, the group should have been maintained in isolation and calves sampled for BVDV either using tissue testing through ear notching at birth or blood sampling after 1 month or older. A more robust recommendation would be to buy in heifers prior to mating from an accredited source.

By the time the PI was identified and culled the cows and heifers had already been running with the bull. Because of the risk of further PIs a decision was made to test the 2013 calf crop using tag and test, two further PIs were identified and culled.

The vaccination protocol of the herd has changed with the introduction of Bovela. Because of the lack of double fencing, ‘over-the-fence’ exposure remains a risk to this herd despite efforts on a national level to eradicate BVDV.

Result

In 2014, 2015 and 2016 the antibody calf crop check tests were negative indicating no exposure in the calves to BVDV. These check tests were mandatory under the Premier Cattle Health Scheme (PCHS) rules and by the Scottish Government BVD Eradication program. As a result of the test, the herd gained PCHS accreditation and Scottish Government BVD negative status.

Questions

Q1: What were the BVD test results of the bought in heifers when they were brought on to the farm?

1. BVD antibody negative.
2. **BVD antigen negative.**
3. BVD antigen positive.

Q2: Which testing method was NOT used in this investigation?

1. Young stock check test.
2. Tag and testing.
3. **Bulk Milk PCR.**