



BVDCymru

2025 - 2026



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To Read the full Bovine Viral
Diarrhoea (Wales) Order 2024
scan the QR code.



What is **BVDCymru**?

Gwaredu BVD was re-branded as **BVDCymru** in 2024 as BVD eradication entered its legislative phase in Wales.

BVDCymru brings together the Welsh cattle sector and Welsh Government in partnership to support and drive the national Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) eradication programme as underpinned by legislation.

BVDCymru is comprised of representatives from the following organisations:



Why eradicate BVD?

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) eradication is important for several key reasons, which include:

Animal Health

- BVD Virus suppresses the immune system, making cattle more susceptible to other diseases, e.g. calf pneumonia.
- It causes reproductive problems like infertility, abortions and birth defects.
- Calves infected during early pregnancy can become Persistently Infected (PI), shedding the virus for life and posing a constant risk to the herd.

Economic Impact

- Infected herds often face significant losses due to lower fertility, decreased milk production, poor growth rates, and increased veterinary costs.
- Eradication reduces long-term costs by eliminating the need for repeated treatments, vaccines and productivity losses.

Improved Herd Performance

- Healthy, BVD-free cattle grow faster, reproduce more efficiently and have higher milk yields, improving overall productivity.

Trade and Reputation

- A BVD-free status should be shared at markets, offering buyers reassurances about the animal(s) they are purchasing.
- Achieving a national BVD-free status would enhance the image of Welsh agriculture as a high quality, disease-conscious sector.

The eradication journey so far in Wales:

2017-2022

Voluntary Gwaredu BVD Programme where 9,369 (85%) Welsh herds engaged with the programme - completing BVD screening to gain herd statuses and PI hunts were carried out where necessary.

June 2022

Following industry demand, a Welsh Government Public BVD Consultation was launched, where 89% of industry respondents were in support of the introduction of legislation.

May 2024

Gwaredu BVD is re-branded as **BVDCymru** as BVD eradication enters its legislative phase.

June 2024

Introduction of The Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (Wales) order 2024.

1 July 2024

Legislation came into force - mandatory annual screening and PI animal isolation

Annual BVD screening is now mandatory for all cattle herds in Wales. There are no exceptions. You **MUST** complete your first screen before 1 July 2025. Any PI animals identified must be isolated and cannot be moved from the farm (except directly to slaughter).

1 July 2026

Additional legislative requirements come into force - movement restrictions and a focus on identifying and removing PI animals

All not negative herds must individually test all animals on the holding, including calves. Any holding which retains a PI animal will be required to conduct a pre-movement BVD antigen test, no more than 60 days before moving, (except direct movement to slaughter). All legislative requirements introduced on 1 July 2024 continue to apply.

BVD eradication in other regions of the British Isles

Many regions of the British Isles have made significant progress in controlling BVD. Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland have all implemented eradication programmes.

Northern Ireland

All calves must be tissue tagged within 20 days of birth to identify any remaining PI animals.

From 2025, movement restrictions will be introduced for affected herds which will further limit spread.

Republic of Ireland

Enforced calf testing and herd surveillance screens, with prompt removal of PI animals and movement restrictions have been introduced to prevent spread. This has significantly reduced the number of BVD cases.

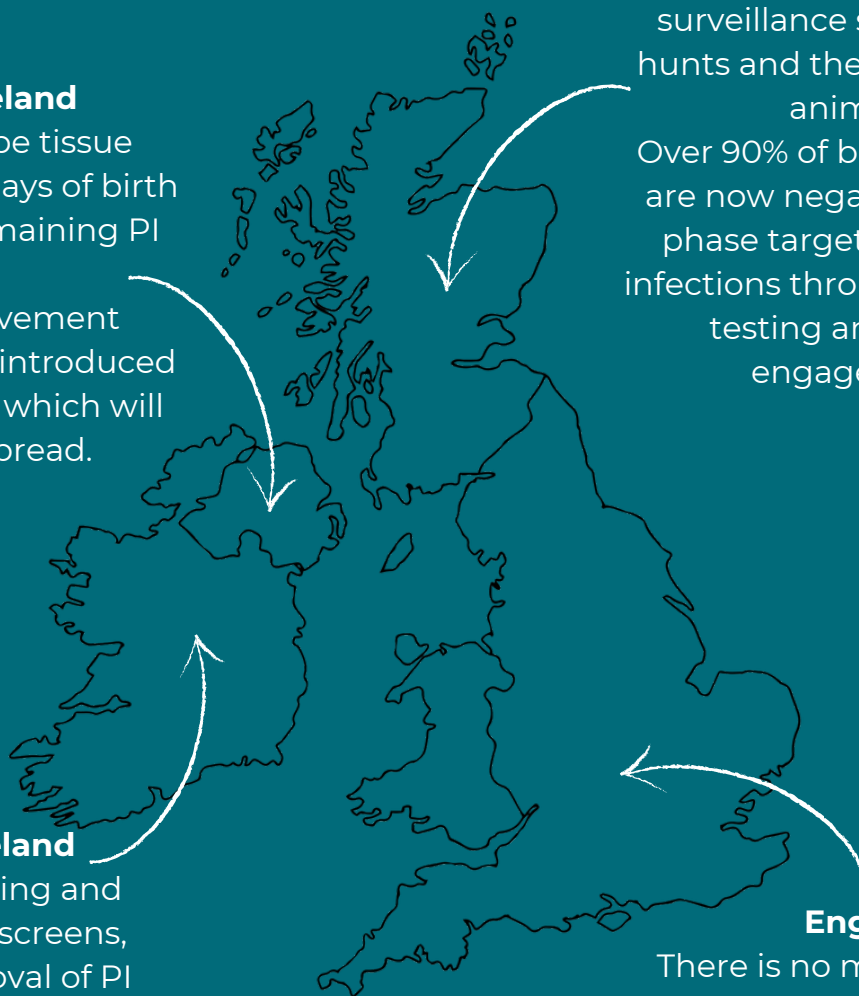
Scotland

Industry-led BVD eradication programme, through surveillance screening, PI hunts and the removal of PI animals.

Over 90% of breeding herds are now negative. The final phase targets remaining infections through continued testing and farmer engagement.

England

There is no mandatory BVD eradication programme. However, the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway will fund work to deal with BVD on farms.



How to become compliant with BVD legislation?

In line with the Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (Wales) order 2024 every farm **must** screen their herd annually for BVD antibodies.

The first annual screen must be carried out by 1 July 2025.

Every farm must screen for BVD - there are no exceptions.

The results of this screen will provide farms with a BVD status and determine if further investigative work is required for legislative compliance.

We anticipate that 80% of herds will screen negative and the only legislative requirement placed on these herds would be to continue to screen annually.

BVD Herd Status:



Every farm will be given a status. The two possible statuses are explained below:

BVD Negative Status

This status is awarded when all five youngstock in each management group tested as part of the annual screen all have a negative antibody result.

Or, when a farm has completed a PI Hunt, all PI animals have been removed, and an application to change the farm status has been submitted.

Next steps:





-  Maintain Biosecurity.
-  Continue to screen annually.

BVD Not Negative Status

This status is appointed to farms where either:

- One or more of the five youngstock screened as part of the annual screen tested antibody positive.
- BVD is diagnosed by any other means.
- A farm's annual screen has expired / not been completed.

Next Steps:

-  If you have not screened in the last 12 months, arrange a test with your vet to get a current status.
-  If you have a recent positive screen (within the last 12 months) contact your vet to discuss conducting a PI Hunt. Your vet may be able to offer an alternative solution.
-  If a PI animal is identified, it must be isolated and cannot move off the holding unless direct to slaughter.
-  If a PI Hunt has been completed and all PI animals have been removed, contact EIDCymru about changing your herd status.

In line with the legislation:

Keepers cannot move BVD antigen positive or PI animals off the holding except directly to slaughter.

All BVD antigen positive animals or confirmed PIs must be isolated on the holding and remain separate from the herd for the rest of their lives.

From 1 July 2026:

A herd with a not negative status cannot move any cattle off a holding without a valid negative BVD antigen test (unless moving directly to slaughter).

If any PI animals are retained on farm, a pre-movement antigen test is needed, within 60 days before moving any other cattle off the farm (unless moving directly to slaughter).

We strongly encourage all farms who receive a not negative status to work closely with their vet in this coming year to clean their herd before 1 July 2026 as things will become more challenging after this.

Accessing your results

Approved registered laboratories will upload BVD test results to the **BVDCymru** database, managed by EIDCymru.

When sampling, the **BVDCymru** form must be completed and accompany the samples to the laboratory.

If your email address and your mobile phone number is filled out on this form, you will be automatically notified when your test results are ready to view.

Results can be downloaded and printed or shared via email from the link sent via the notification to support informed purchasing.

If you do not have an email address and a mobile phone number, please contact your vet practice to receive your results - they will have been sent a link to the results.



What is BVD and how do I test for it?

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) is a disease caused by a virus.

BVD significantly impacts cattle welfare and farm productivity causing abortions, infertility, deformed calves, and poor herd health, increasing treatment costs.

Eradicating BVD improves herd health and reduces medication expenses.

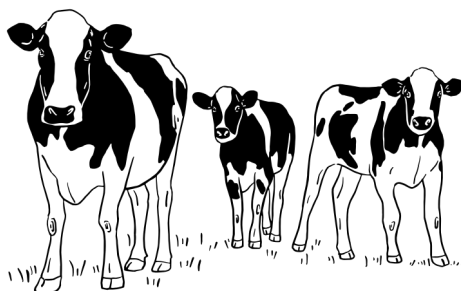
It is estimated that the annual costs of BVD presence to a 100-cow beef farm is £4,500 and for a 130-cow dairy farm, £15,000 a year.

How to test for BVD?

There are two different ways of testing for BVD, both of which test for different things within the herd:

- Antibody testing is used to find out your herd's status during the annual screen.
- Antigen testing is used to find the virus status of individual animals.

A more in depth explanation on the difference between the two tests, which situation each test would be used for, and what the results mean is provided next.



Annual Screen (Antibody Test)

Purpose - to identify if a herd has been exposed to the virus.

How do I screen for BVD?

Contact your vet practice to arrange a visit to your farm. Consider combining your annual BVD screen with your TB test or other activity for efficiency.

The herd status will be checked by:

- Blood sampling five unvaccinated calves between 9 and 18 months of age from each management group*.
- However, if this is not possible speak to your vet for further guidance on which alternative cattle can be tested on your farm.

**Definition of Management Group - cattle groups managed and housed separately on the same farm. Cattle must be mixed for 2 months to be classified as a single management group.*



Annual screen (antibody) results - what do they mean?

Antibody Positive Screen - BVD Not Negative Status

At some point in their lives these animals have been exposed to BVD virus.

A positive result in young animals (9-18 months old) indicates that the exposure was recent in time.

The source of infection could be a PI animal on your farm, contact with neighbouring cattle, cattle mixing in marts or other biosecurity breaches.

Antibody positive animals should not be isolated and culled, they are not a long term source of infection.

If you have a positive antibody screen, this is a warning signal and you should talk to your vet about the results and conduct further investigations and antigen tests (i.e. a PI Hunt) on your farm.

Antibody Negative Screen - BVD Negative Status

These animals have **NOT** been infected with BVD in their lifetime.

If all animals on your annual screen have a negative result, this suggests that BVD is not present on your farm, especially if homebred animals were tested.

If you have a negative annual antibody screen, no further actions are required - your herd is BVD negative.

Maintain biosecurity and continue to screen annually to retain your negative status.

PI Hunt (Antigen Test)

Purpose - to identify persistently infected (PI) animals, which are responsible for spreading BVD. A process known as a PI Hunt.

What is a Persistently Infected (PI) Animal?

Persistently Infected (PI) animals are central to BVD transmission, continuously shedding high levels of virus and compromising herd health.

PI animals continuously shed the virus and will infect other cattle they come in contact with.

Cattle cannot become PI animals later in life, they are either born PI animals or not.

Persistently Infected (PI) animals are cattle which have tested virus positive twice, 21 days apart. BVD PI animals can only be moved directly to slaughter. They should not be moved through a market or to any other holding.

PI animals cannot be treated or cured.



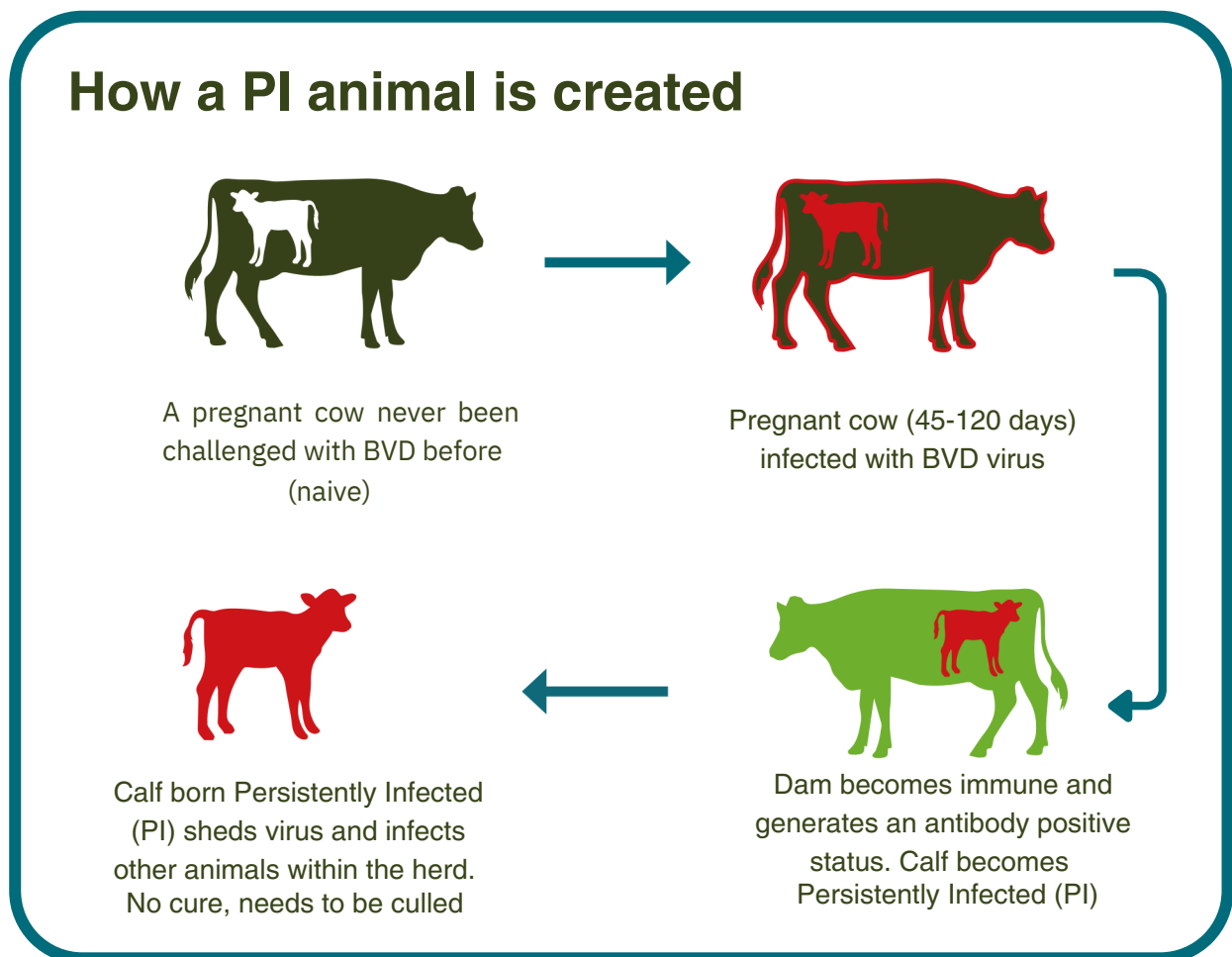
What is a PI Hunt?

Following a positive annual screen, and discussions with a vet, a PI hunt is recommended to identify those animals responsible for shedding the virus within the herd (PI animals), and removing them, to eradicate BVD.

Blood or ear tissue samples are collected and sent to the lab for analysis to diagnose if the tested animals are virus positive.

All cattle on the holding, including aborted fetuses must be individually tested as part of a PI Hunt.

A complete PI Hunt is when every individual animal registered at that CPH is antigen tested.



What do my antigen (PI Hunt) test results mean?

Antigen Positive

This animal is carrying the virus.

An animal that has a positive antigen test may be a PI animal or transiently infected.

An antigen positive animal should be isolated immediately to avoid further spread.

Positive antigen animals should be retested 21 days later to confirm if they are PI animals.

If the second test is antigen positive then the animal is a confirmed PI and it should remain isolated and it is recommended that it is culled as soon as is practically possible.

PI animals cannot be treated or cured.

Antigen Negative

This animal is not a PI animal.

A negative calf test result indicates a negative dam.

If the second, repeat test is antigen negative the animal was transiently infected at the time of the first test and had cleared the infection by the time of the second test 21 days later.

This animal is no longer a source of BVD infection on your farm and can remain as part of the herd.

Case Study: *From BVD Burden to BVD Freedom*

A beef cattle business in Mid Wales, struggled for years with BVD.





The farm had un-identified persistently infected (PI) animals, which continuously spread the virus.

This led to high rates of abortions and stillbirths, weak calves, and reduced growth rates, even in vaccinated animals, as the constant viral challenge undermined herd immunity.

The financial burden was substantial due to lost calves, higher feed expenses, and increased medical treatments.

The Solution: A Targeted Eradication Program

Working alongside their farm Vet, George Roberts from Hafren Vets, the farm implemented a comprehensive BVD eradication program:

-  **PI Animal Removal:**
 - All calves were ear-tag tested for BVD, and any PI animals were immediately isolated and sent to slaughter.
-  **Enhanced Biosecurity:**
 - Strict protocols were put in place for new animal introductions (isolation, testing) and farm access (fencing, visitor control) to prevent re-introduction
-  **Strategic Vaccination:**
 - A consistent vaccination schedule was maintained for breeding animals and youngstock to build robust herd immunity
-  **Ongoing Monitoring:**
 - The farmer has continued to screen for BVD annually, and following his screening since the launch of the BVD legislation, his herd has a BVD negative status.

The Result: BVD-Free and Thriving



No More PI Animals:

- The source of continuous infection was eliminated.



Improved Reproduction:

- Higher conception rates and fewer abortions.



Healthier Calves:

- Faster growth rates, reduced illness, and lower medication needs.



Cost Savings:

- Substantial reductions in veterinary bills and improved feed conversion.



Increased Profitability:

- A direct boost to the farm's bottom line due to better performance across the herd.

Conclusion: A Model for Success

Speaking about the farm's journey, their farm vet George Roberts (*pictured below*) noted:

“As a result of the farmers hard work, it has been demonstrated that BVD eradication is achievable and highly beneficial. Their success highlights the critical roles of PI animal removal, stringent biosecurity, effective vaccination, and continuous monitoring”.



This Mid Wales farm now operates with a healthier, more productive, and more profitable cattle herd, serving as a powerful example for other farms facing BVD challenges.

FAQ's

Q. Do I need to screen for BVD?

- ☞ Yes, according to the legislation, every holding with cattle in Wales **must screen** for BVD annually regardless of the management system.

Q. I have no animals in the right age group of 9 - 18 months, do I still need to screen?

- ☞ Yes, you must complete a screen. Speak to your vet, they will choose the most suitable animals in your herd for testing.

Q. I vaccinate all my animals, do I still need to screen?

- ☞ Yes, the legislation requires all herds to complete an annual BVD screen. To achieve this you may need to adjust your vaccination protocol. You should speak to your vet about how you can work together to make any adjustments needed.


Q. I tag and test all of my animals, so I know I have no PIs, why do I still need to screen?

- ☞ Following an industry consultation, the Welsh cattle industry has adopted the screening approach for BVD eradication. Therefore, the legislation states, every cattle herd must complete an annual youngstock screen, **there are no exceptions**. Any herd not screened annually will automatically receive a not negative herd status.


Q. I run a fattening unit and take all my cattle straight to slaughter, how does the legislation apply to me?

- ☞ You must complete an annual youngstock screen to be compliant with the legislation.


Q. Can I opt out of BVD testing?

-  No, all herds regardless of management system will need to complete an annual screen to be compliant with the legislation.


Q. If my annual screen comes back positive, do I have to do a PI Hunt?

-  From 1 July 2026, all herds which screen antibody positive will be required to undertake additional antigen testing.


Q. Why do PI animals test antibody negative?

-  PI animals will test negative for antibodies as they are infected in utero at the time the immune system is developing. Therefore, BVD virus is seen as a normal part of the calf, in the same way as its skin, heart and other organs. As such, the immune system learns to ignore BVD and the virus can replicate uncontrollably. If you are concerned about this, please consult your vet.

Q. Can I use bulk milk testing as part of my PI Hunt?

-  No, every animal must be individually tested via blood or tissue sample.

Q. I buy cattle from outside Wales, how do I ensure I am still compliant with the legislation?

-  Any cattle of unknown BVD status brought into Wales must be antigen tested within 20 days of arrival. A pregnant cow of unknown status must be isolated until tested antigen negative or calved.



For further information:

Contact your Vet

If you have any concerns, your first point of contact should be your vet. Their knowledge of your farm and herd puts them in the best position to provide prompt and appropriate advice.

Additional Supporting Organisations:

- ☞ For results or database queries contact EIDCymru on **01970 636959**
- ☞ For technical or policy queries contact **BVD Cymru** on **01554 748576**
- ☞ For policy queries contact the following organisations:
 - Farmers' Union of Wales - **your FUW county office** or **01970 820820**
 - NFU Cymru - **0370 845 8458**
 - Welsh Veterinary Science Centre - **01970 612374**
 - Mentera (Animal Health Services) - **01248 668639**
 - Iechyd da - **01970 636688**

