

Herd Health Planning IBR



Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (Infectious Pustular Vulvovaginitis; IBR/IPV), is an infectious disease of cattle caused by the virus Bovine Herpesvirus-1. A few countries are now close to eradication. In order to gain access to export markets, herds may soon have to prove that they are free from IBR.

How does IBR affect cattle?

- The virus can infect the upper respiratory tract or the reproductive tract. The severity of symptoms depends on the strain of the virus and the susceptibility of the cattle
- The incubation period ranges from 2 to 20 days
- Clinical signs of infection are nasal discharge, fever and conjunctivitis. In severe cases it can lead to fatal pneumonia
- In adult cows infection is associated with a severe and prolonged drop in milk yield, reduced fertility and abortions and inflammation of the vulva/prepuce
- Mortality is low but the economic losses can be significant.

How is IBR spread?

Once an animal has become infected it remains so, despite the development of an effective immune response. These animals can shed virus at any time thereafter when stressed (eg transport, calving, starting a bull in work or bringing in for the winter). The virus is usually shed in secretions from the respiratory tract and eyes but can be spread in the semen of infected bulls. Bringing animals carrying the virus into a herd is usually the source of new infections in a herd that has not been exposed to BHV-1 before.

Vaccination is an effective way of controlling the disease, but it does not stop infected animals from shedding the virus and it is not a quarantine barrier against introduction of the disease into a herd.

Is IBR a problem in your herd?

Herds with IBR suffer mainly from low-grade problems associated with calf pneumonia, decreased fertility and occasional abortions. More serious problems are seen on farms that have not been exposed to IBR before. Outbreaks with milk-drop and fever in most cows and subsequent abortions and increase in calf pneumonia are seen. If your herd is experiencing reproductive problems or outbreaks amongst calves, then you should investigate whether IBR is involved.

How do I control IBR or reduce the risk of IBR infection?

- Operate a closed herd policy to prevent introduction of disease carrying animals
- Buy breeding animals from an accredited herd or find out the IBR status of the source herd
- Keep bought in breeding animals in isolation until they have been tested. However, single tests on individual animals can fail to pick up a carrier animal
- Separate cattle with 3 metre fencing to eliminate nose-to-nose contact from neighbouring farms or between separately managed groups
- An infected stock bull can be an efficient transmitter of infection. Pay attention to the status of the bull on farms not using AI
- Systematic testing and culling of infected cattle has been successful in some countries
- Discuss vaccination with your veterinary surgeon. Vaccination is an effective means of control, but does not stop infected animals from shedding the virus at a later date. Vaccination should be considered on an individual farm basis with disease history, farm management practices and assessment of farm risk all taken into account.

You can acquire IBR-free accredited status through a CHeCS cattle health scheme. A farm can also be a part of a screening and eradication programme for IBR with some schemes.

Managing the risk of IBR

Lowest risk

1. Free from the BHV-1 virus and strict biosecurity to keep IBR out
2. IBR infected herd but test and removal of positive animals plus vaccination
3. IBR infected herd but no testing for positive animals and no vaccination
4. Free from BHV-1 virus but poor biosecurity and regular purchase of animals of unknown IBR status.

Highest risk

Herd health planning - IBR decisions

Is there a problem?

Date: _____

Results – this year	Number	Percentage IBR positive	Target for next year
No. of abortions			
Clinical cases of IBR			
Deaths from pneumonia			
Blood tests for IBR antibodies			
Other tests for BHV-1			
Other signs of IBR			

Is any action planned? Yes/No

Date of last vaccination _____

Vaccination		
Product Used	Target groups	Dates

Date of last testing _____

Testing		
Dates	Target groups	Results

Biosecurity

Double fencing Yes/No
 Quarantine of purchased animals Yes/No
 Blood testing of purchased animals before mixing Yes/No
 Testing of stock bulls before breeding season Yes/No

Purchase policy

Closed herd policy Yes/No
 Buy stock from IBR Accredited herds in CheCS Health Scheme Yes/No
 Find out health status of the herd of origin Yes/No
 Testing and culling or segregation of IBR positive cattle Yes/No

Join accreditation programme Yes/No

Herd health planning IBR review date: _____