



Easy Read

# Consultation on Proposed Introduction of Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) Herd Restrictions October 2022

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Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

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## Consultation on

Proposed Introduction of Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) Herd Restrictions  
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# About us

We are the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

# What do we do?

Here are some of the things we do.



- We look after the development of farming, forests and fishing in Northern Ireland.
- We provide a service to look after the health and welfare of animals, fish and plants.
- We look after environment and rural development in Northern Ireland.
- We provide research, expert advice and education.
- We look after some parts of public health in how food is made.

# What is BVD?

- Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) is one of the most serious diseases in cattle in Northern Ireland.
- The disease can cause illness in cattle.
- Calves infected with BVD while in the womb may not live past two years of age and spread the disease to other cattle during their whole lives.
- The disease costs farmers a lot of money.
- It also affects the environment because infected cattle produce harmful gases.



## What is DAERA doing about it?

We work closely with industry to help it get rid of BVD. In 2016, we made a new law to help control the spread of BVD. It means farmers must:

- test all calves for BVD before they are 20 days old;
- test any new cattle that have come into the farm, if they haven't already been tested for BVD at birth;
- keep cattle that have BVD away from healthy animals; and
- only sell animals that have tested negative for BVD.

Since the law was made, the number of animals with BVD has got smaller. However, the disease hasn't gone away and is still spreading, so we must work together to do more to get rid of it.



## What do we want to do?

- If there was no BVD, cattle would be healthier, produce more and farmers would save money on medicines. Money spent trying to get rid of it could be spent on other important work.
- It would be better for the environment as there would be less harmful gases produced by infected animals.
- This document explains the new things we want to do to try to get rid of BVD in Northern Ireland.

## Stopping the spread of BVD

- Along with industry, we want to do more to encourage and help farmers to look after the health of their cattle. We want to do more to help farmers stop their cattle from catching BVD.
- All farmers must now have their cattle tested for BVD. If BVD is found on a farm, we want to stop it spreading to other farms.
- The best way to do this is to stop the movement of cattle from or into farms.
- We are, therefore, thinking about introducing herd restrictions in the situations as set out in this document.
- Herd restrictions don't apply to cattle moved between Northern Ireland and the European Union.

## Animals that have BVD or unclear results

- If a farmer has been told that an animal has BVD, we would give the farmer time to get rid of the animal before we would introduce herd restrictions. At the start, we would allow 28 days, but this would gradually come down to zero over one - two years.
- If the BVD tests do not give a clear result, the farmer should retest the animal within these 28 days to make sure it doesn't have BVD.
- If a farmer doesn't get rid of the animal that has BVD or retest animals without clear results, the Department would introduce herd restrictions on his or her farm.
- If any animals from another herd have been close to the animals on the farm that has BVD, they would also not be allowed to move.
- Cattle on a restricted farms would only be allowed to move if they are going directly to slaughter, or if we consider there is an important reason, for example, for their health, comfort or safety.
- These herd restrictions would only be lifted three weeks after the farmer has got rid of the last animal with BVD on the farm.
- The farmer would have to test all cattle that haven't had a BVD test before we would lift the herd restrictions.

## Female cattle on restricted farms

- Calves that get BVD while in the womb will always have BVD and can spread it to other cattle during their whole lives.
- Therefore, any cows or heifers over 12 months old on a restricted farm, at the same time as an animal with BVD is there, would also be stopped from moving from the farm for up to 41 weeks.
- They would only be allowed to move sooner if they calve and the calve doesn't have BVD or they are tested for BVD.





## Animals without a BVD test

- If a farm has a lot of animals that haven't been tested for BVD, some of these animals may have BVD.
- Therefore, we are also thinking about stopping the movement of cattle from or into farms if the farmer doesn't test his or her animals.
- Those farms with the most untested animals would be selected first until eventually any farms could be restricted if the farmers don't test their animals.
- We would remind farmers with untested animals that they must be tested and would give them 28 days to test.
- If the animals are not tested after this time, we would restrict the herd until they are tested and there is no BVD on the farm. Any farms whose animals are in very close contact with the restricted farm would also be restricted.

## Older Animals

- Currently only animals born since March 2016 are required to be tested for BVD. It is possible that older animals may have BVD and are spreading it to other animals.
- We, therefore, think that older animals that do not have a negative BVD test should now be tested for BVD.

# Have your say

You can respond to this consultation by:



- **Clicking on this link to answer the questions:**  
<https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/daera/bvd-herd-restrictions>



- **Telephone:** 028 7744 2303 and talk to a member of the team. If you have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via Text Relay.  
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## Closing Date

We need to receive your views by **Tuesday 20 December 2022**



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