**Establishment Free from BVD - criteria and how to apply**

Keepers who wish to export cattle for Breeding & Production to an EU Member State which has an approved BVD eradication programme or BVD Free Status will have to meet the BVD requirements of the Export Health Certificate (EHC). Full details of these requirements are [here](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/bvd-requirements-export-cattle-eu-member-states-approved-bvd-eradication-programme-or-bvd-free). **This includes keepers in NI who wish to export to the ROI when Ireland’s BVD programme is approved (expected in July/August 2022).**

It is recommended that exporters consult with their authorised Private Veterinary Practitioner well in advance of the proposed export date to determine which of the BVD options on the EHC will be certified, as some of the options require significant planning in advance of the export.

Some of the options to export require the herd to meet the requirements of Establishment Free from BVD status as detailed in Annex 4 of Delegated Regulation 2020/689. Keepers who believe they meet these criteria can apply to DAERA for a certificate to confirm Establishment Free from BVD status. This document explains

1. the criteria for the granting of Establishment Free from BVD status
2. the application process and how Establishment Free from BVD status can be used to support cattle exports

**It should be noted that** **an application for** **Establishment Free from BVD status is not compulsory and other options which require quarantine and/or blood sampling for BVD virus/antibody of the animals to be exported are available. It is expected that most keepers will not be able to demonstrate that all the conditions of Establishment Free from BVD status have been met, particularly due to the requirements for animals which moved into the herd in the previous 12 months.**

**For most keepers, one of the alternative options which require quarantine and/or blood sampling for BVD virus/antibody of the animals to be exported is likely to be easier to achieve.**

**NOTE – any reference in this document to the ‘herd’ refers to both the herd number from which animals will be exported AND any associated herds.**

1. **criteria for the granting of ESTABLISHMENT FREE FROM BVD Status**

Broadly speaking, the criteria for the granting of Establishment Free from BVD status can be broken down into 4 main areas:

1. No confirmed cases of BVD within the herd during the last 18 months;
2. The herd has been subjected to one of a number of stipulated testing regimes for BVD;
3. All animals moved into the herd in the last 12 months have been subjected to one of a number of stipulated origin/testing/quarantine requirements before entry
4. All germinal products (semen/embryos) moved onto the establishment meet one of two stipulated requirements.
5. **No confirmed cases of BVD within the herd during the last 18 months**

Requirement: *during the past 18 months there has been no confirmed case of BVD in a bovine animal kept in the establishment*

If an application is made for Establishment Free from BVD status, the herd keeper will have to attest that this is the case. DAERA will then verify this by way of examining information held on our Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS). Please note that this requirement applies to all animals that have been in the herd (including associated herds) within the last 18 months and is not limited to the current animals in the applicant herd.

An animal is considered as being a ‘confirmed case’ if the most recent validated test result is positive.

1. **The herd has been subjected to one of a number of stipulated testing regimes for BVD**

Requirement: *the bovine animals kept in the establishment have been subjected to at least one of the following testing regimes taking into account possible previous vaccinations*

Three sub options are available. Please note only one of the 3 sub options has to be satisfied:

1. *tests for the detection of BVD virus (BVDV) antigen or genome have been carried out, with negative results, on samples of all bovine animals. At least from all calves born in the previous 12 months, the samples must have been taken after or at the same time as official identification, but not later than 20 days postpartum. The dams of those calves with negative test results do not need to be tested;*

DAERA regard this as the most applicable to the Northern Ireland situation as the BVD Eradication Programme requires that all calves are tissue tagged within 20 days of birth.

If an application is made for Establishment Free from BVD status, the herd keeper will have to attest that this is the case. DAERA will then verify this by examining information held on APHIS. Please note that the requirement is being interpreted to mean that a) all animals currently in the herd have BVDN or INDNEG status (including animals before statutory tissue testing started in 2016) and b) all animals born in the herd in the previous 12 months (including animals moved out of the herd) have a BVDN status, with the exception of calves born in the previous 30 days.

1. *serological tests for the detection of antibodies against BVDV have been carried out, with negative results, on samples taken over a period of not less than 12 months on at least three occasions at intervals of not less than 4 months from bovine animals which have been kept in the establishment for at least 3 months prior to testing.*

*The number of animals tested must allow at least for the detection, with a 95 % level of confidence, of seropositive animals at a target prevalence rate of 50 % and must be at least five animals or all the animals if there are fewer than five animals kept.*

*In case the bovine animals of the establishment are kept in separate groups without direct contact with each other, a respective number of animals of each group must be tested.*

DAERA consider that the number of herds in Northern Ireland that meet this criteria will be low, as serological testing is rarely used to this extent for BVD surveillance in NI. If however a keeper believes their herd meets this criteria, they should email [BVDadmin@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:BVDadmin@daera-ni.gov.uk) for advice on what documentation they would need to produce to support their application.

1. *a combination of the testing regimes set out in points (i) and (ii) has been applied over a period of not less than 12 months.*

*The capacity of the combined testing regime to detect the disease must be equivalent to that of the testing regimes referred to in points (i) and (ii);*

Once again, DAERA consider that the number of herds in Northern Ireland that meet this criteria will be low. If however a keeper believes their herd meets this criteria, they should email [BVDadmin@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:BVDadmin@daera-ni.gov.uk) for advice on what documentation they would need to produce to support their application.

1. **BVD status of animals moved into the herd in the previous 12 months**

Requirement: all animals moved into the herd in the previous 12 months have been subjected to one of a number of stipulated origin/testing/isolation requirements*:*

Three options are available. Applicants only need to meet one of the three options. Please note that this requirement relates to all animals that have moved onto the holding within the last 12 months.

1. *originate from establishments free from BVD located in a Member State or zone free from BVD*

DAERA do not consider this to be an option that will be applicable. If however a keeper believes their herd meets this criteria, they should email [BVDadmin@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:BVDadmin@daera-ni.gov.uk) for advice on what documentation they would need to produce to support their application.

1. *originate from establishments free from BVD, where*

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| *—* | *serological tests referred to in point 1(c) (ii) or (iii) of Section 2 of Chapter 1 of Delegated Regulation 2020/689 have been carried out, with negative results, within the past 4 months; or* |

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| *—* | *prior to their dispatch, they have been tested individually to exclude BVDV transmission into the establishment of destination taking into account the testing history and, if relevant, the animal’s stage of gestation;* |

If a keeper believes their herd meets this criteria, they should email [BVDadmin@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:BVDadmin@daera-ni.gov.uk) for advice on what documentation they would need to produce to support their application.

1. *have tested negative in a test for BVDV antigen or genome, and*

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| *—* | *have been subjected to quarantine for a period of at least 21 days prior to their dispatch and, in case of pregnant dams, have tested negative for antibodies against BVDV on samples taken after not less than 21 days of quarantine; or* |

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| *—* | *have tested positive for antibodies against BVDV either prior to their dispatch or, in case of pregnant dams, before insemination preceding the current gestation;* |

DAERA consider this to be the most applicable scenario within Northern Ireland. Please note that official laboratory results for each animal moved onto the holding will have to be supplied and these will have to show a sampling date/result date to satisfy the requirements as listed above. Please also note that quarantine refers to an official Approved Quarantine Establishment which must have been in place prior to the commencement of the quarantine period. In the case of females of reproductive age (12 months of age or older when moved into the exporting herd), official documentation regarding pregnancy status will be required. Any pregnant animal will require documentation detailing what stage of pregnancy they were at when they entered the herd in addition to the laboratory results detailed above.

DAERA recognise that these are very stringent requirements and many herd keepers will not be able to satisfy them. The more animals moved onto the holding the more supporting documentation that will have to be amassed. **Herds with no animals moved onto them during the previous 12 months will be able to ignore this requirement.**

1. **All germinal products (semen/embryos) moved onto the establishment meet one of two stipulated requirements.**

Requirement: *since the beginning of the sampling referred to in point 1(b) (previous 12 months) all germinal products of bovine animals introduced into the establishment originate from:*

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| *(i)* | *establishments free from BVD; or* |

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| *(ii)* | *approved germinal product establishments.* |

DAERA consider that point (i) will not be applicable to the Northern Ireland farming situation. Any keeper that has moved semen/embryos onto their holding within the last 12 months must ensure they originate from a DAERA (or other competent authority) approved premises. In practice, semen purchased from a recognised commercial semen company and embryos implanted by a DAERA approved Embryo Team are very likely to be acceptable For advice on individual herds please email [BVDadmin@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:BVDadmin@daera-ni.gov.uk) .

1. **Application for Establishment Free from BVD Status**

Any bovine herd keeper who wishes to apply for Establishment Free from BVD status will have to do so through DAERA. As herds must continue to meet the requirements of Establishment Free from BVD status (e.g. by continuing to tissue tag all calves and making sure all animal moved onto the holding meet the requirements in point 3 above) DAERA are only able to grant Establishment Free from BVD status for a limited time period (14 calendar days). It is envisaged that keepers will only apply for Establishment Free from BVD status to facilitate a specific export of cattle for Breeding and Production to an EU Member State which has an approved BVD programme or BVD Free status.

If you believe that your herd meets the requirements of Establishment Free from BVD status, you can apply by emailing form EF2 to [tradeadminpost@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:tradeadminpost@daera-ni.gov.uk) . As DAERA will have to validate the application by checking information on APHIS and potentially cross referencing lab results and germinal product purchases, an application should be made at least 2 weeks prior to any intended export. Any application made with a timeframe of less than 2 weeks cannot be guaranteed to be returned in time.

If DAERA confirm the conditions for Establishment Free from BVD status have been met a letter (EF3) will be issued to you, which will act as a Support Certificate to enable your authorised Private Veterinary Practitioner to sign the Export Health Certificate (EHC). **It should be noted that there are additional requirements as well as having Establishment Free from BVD status which must be satisfied before the EHC can be signed.** Further exports from the same herd after the Establishment Free from BVD letter has expired will require a new application.