

A study to investigate the use and application of BVDV vaccine in UK cattle

The aim of this study was to investigate if farmers were using, storing or administering BVD vaccine in a way that could compromise efficacy and lead to vaccine failure, and to identify where those deficiencies were.

A survey was conducted of 71 farms in the counties of Norfolk, Devon, Somerset and Cheshire.

A third of farmers never referred to the vaccine product datasheet. 21% vaccinated using the wrong dose or route of administration. 100% of farms administered two doses in the primary vaccination course, but 48% gave these at the incorrect interval. Just 24% completed the primary vaccination course at the recommended time prior to service.

There was an apparent lack of awareness of the sick and immunocompromised animal and its reduced ability to respond to vaccination. Just 5 participants identified illness in an animal as a reason not to vaccinate.

Breakdown in the vaccine cold-chain potentially occurred; during transport, where just 10% had the ability to keep vaccine chilled; during refrigeration on farm, where just 11% reported using a thermometer to monitor temperature; and during use where just 33% attempted to keep the vaccine cool. Further risks for inactivation or deterioration of vaccine were through contamination, identified in 13%, and through open bottles of vaccine being kept longer than the recommended 10 hours, longer than a month on 34% of farms.

Communication between vet and farmer was shown to be good with over 80% having relevant discussions within a year. This demonstrates an opportunity for regular reassessment and review of BVD and vaccination within the herd.

There is an apparent misconception that by implementing vaccination, protection from disease will be achieved. Correct and appropriate use of the vaccine must always be ensured and the importance of biosecurity, along with testing and elimination of PIs, emphasised.