



AHI BULLETIN

Autumn time – watch for IBR in your herd!

IBR is a highly contagious virus primarily affecting the respiratory tract, and outbreaks in breeding herds are often associated with the stress of the housing period. If uncontrolled, IBR usually persists indefinitely in a herd as all infected animals become 'latent carriers' for life. Reactivation of the virus in latent carriers can occur occasionally, with carriers becoming infectious and spreading the virus to healthy animals through respiratory fluids. Purchase of an apparently healthy carrier animal is the most common means by which infection enters a herd. Attention should, therefore, be paid to purchase and quarantine policy, particularly where carrier animals are considered to be absent or present at a very low level (e.g. dairy herds with a negative bulk tank reading). In suckler herds, blood testing will be required to determine presence or absence of carriers. In larger herds, negative blood test

results in a representative sample of 30 animals is consistent with a low to zero prevalence.

IBR is a recognised part of the respiratory disease complex in finishing herds, particularly where animals are purchased from multiple sources of unknown health status. In such cases, it is likely that some animals will be carriers and the stresses associated with weaning, transport, mixing and housing may result in reactivation of infection, with transmission to susceptible animals in the group and resulting in clinical disease. Mixed infections with other viruses and bacteria can result in more severe disease. Reduction of stress prior to and during transportation and on arrival at farm can help minimize the problem. Use of IBR vaccines (ideally in advance of movement or on arrival on the farm) can help control the contribution of IBR to the respiratory disease complex and should be discussed with your own veterinary practitioner.

Clinical signs include:

- Dullness and reduced appetite
- High body temperature
- Rapid and loud breathing, sometimes with coughing
- Fluid discharge from nose and eyes
- Sudden reduced milk production, abortion, nervous signs (normally only in young calves).

[Click here](#) or more information see the AHI leaflets on IBR in cattle