ANIMAL HEALTH IRELAND

Contributing to a profitable and sustainable farming and agri-food sector through improved animal health

AHI BULLETIN

IBR UPDATE

Infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR) is a highly infectious respiratory disease of cattle caused by bovine herpesvirus 1 (BoHV-1).

IBR is widespread in Ireland with evidence that 70% of cattle herds have been exposed to the virus. The virus typically spreads by close contact between animals although airborne spread of virus may occur over distances of up to 5 metres and it can also be spread by using contaminated semen, equipment and by people.

The disease is characterised by fever and upper respiratory tract signs including conjunctivitis and discharges from the eyes and nose. This may be accompanied by decreased milk yields. Following infection, all animals develop an immune response but the virus is not completely eliminated and a latent infection is established. During this time the animal will not shed virus but episodes of stress (calving, transport etc) can lead to reactivation of the virus and re-excretion. Latently infected animals are key for the introduction and maintenance of infection in farms.

IBR Pilot Programme

A pilot IBR eradication programme has been developed by Animal Health Ireland's Technical Working Group (TWG) for herds participating in Phase Three of the Teagasc/ Irish Farmers Journal BETTER Farm Beef Programme.

The programme involves the application of an IBR on-farm veterinary risk assessment and management plan (VIBRAMP), sampling using a herd 'snap shot' and provision of advice on the next steps for on-farm control of IBR.

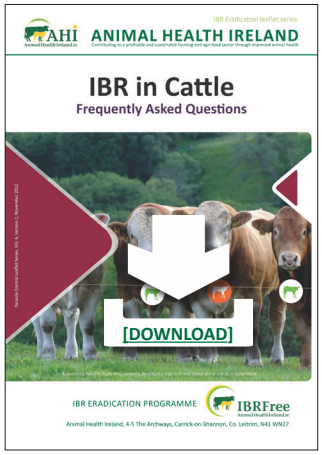
The VIBRAMP consists of a questionnaire that captures details of the farm structure, animal movements, biosecurity and vaccination history, with the vet and herd owner agreeing up to three changes to improve biosecurity.

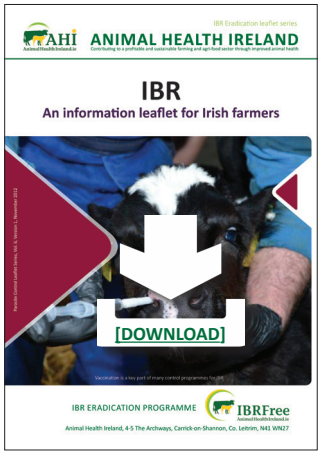
The herd 'snap shot' entails the sampling of 30 randomly selected animals over 9 months-old that are used or intended for breeding and testing the samples with an IBR gE (marker) ELISA.

Results from this testing and investigation will be used to evaluate the herd status, to identify risk factors associated with the presence of infection, to identify common biosecurity risks and inform the decision on further testing and vaccination. For example, testing of all animals in low prevalence herds would be justified, allowing them to move rapidly to freedom.

The information generated will also be used by the IBR TWG to inform options for an IBR eradication programme for Ireland.

For more information on IBR **[Click here].**





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