

Bovine Viral Diarrhea

CAUSE: The bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) virus causes a number of disease syndromes in cattle. It was first recognized in North America in the 1940s.

EFFECT: Depending on the stage of gestation when infected, BVD may result in early embryonic death, abortion, premature births, or the birth of weak young. Transplacental infection in the first four months of gestation will lead to persistently infected (PI) animals, which may appear clinically normal but shed the virus. BVD infection can lead to respiratory disease. In some situations, a severe and deadly form of disease, called mucosal disease, can result from BVD.

How is BVD spread? The virus is spread animal to animal through secretions and excretions. Transmission can occur through semen and embryo transfer. Use semen only from bull studs that follow the Certified Semen Services health requirements. The virus can also be spread by fomites (e.g. on hands, clothes, and footwear).

How can BVD be prevented? Test and isolate additions to your herd. Make sure your herd is properly vaccinated. Keep in mind that vaccination is not 100% protective. Test for and cull persistently infected heifers.

What if there is an outbreak? Immediately separate affected and exposed animals from the rest of the herd. Even a well-prepared herd may succumb to BVD when introducing new animals if the right mix of naïve and shedding animals with the right mix of viral types meet.

For more information on BVD, see:

[BVDVfacts](#)

[New York State Cattle Health Assurance Program: Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus Module](#)

[USDA APHIS Info Sheet: Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus](#)

[The Merck Veterinary Manual: Bovine Viral Diarrhea and Mucosal Disease Complex](#)