

BVDV Testing Strategy Guide

Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus

Persistently infected (PI) animals never recover—so you can never let your guard down.

Cow/Calf Ranches

Maximum Protection Strategy

Prior to breeding season:

- Test all:
 - Calves (If calf is negative, dam is negative. No need to test dam.)
 - Cows of positive calves (If calf can't be identified back to the cow, consider testing all the cows.)
 - Open cows
 - Bulls
 - New cattle introduced to the ranch, including replacement heifers, bulls and stockers
- To minimize risk, keep vulnerable cattle (especially pregnant cattle and those of uncertain testing status) away from fence-line contact with neighboring operations' untested cattle.
- Establish a quality vaccination program with your veterinarian.
- Annually test using the [Surveillance/Maintenance Strategy](#) and/or continue to test each calf crop (**note**: PI-tested calves bring added value).

Surveillance/Maintenance Strategy

- Test all:
 - Aborted fetuses
 - Calves that die
 - Animals that become ill or are treated for bovine respiratory disease (BRD) and other illnesses
 - New cattle introduced to the ranch
- If you detect a PI animal, implement the [Maximum Protection Strategy](#).

Seed Stock/Purebred Breeders

Maximum Protection Strategy

- Same as for Cow/Calf Ranches PLUS test all bulls and heifers offered for sale.

Surveillance Strategy

- Same as for Cow/Calf Ranches.

Meet with your veterinarian to design a BVDV-PI strategy for your operation that includes vaccinations, testing, risk assessment and biosecurity.

PI (Persistently Infected)

An animal infected prior to birth that remains infected for life and can continually infect other cattle.

TI (Transiently Infected)

An exposed animal whose system eventually fights off the virus. Infection lasts several days to a few weeks and makes the animal susceptible to other diseases.



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Stocker/Background/Feedyard

Maximum Protection Strategy

- Purchase BVDV-PI-tested cattle.
- Upon arrival—or before—**test all calves** with unknown PI status.
- Establish a quality vaccination program with your veterinarian.

Medium Protection Strategy

- Upon arrival—or before—**test all high-risk calves** with unknown PI status.
- Follow the **Surveillance/Maintenance Strategy** for all other cattle.
- Establish a quality vaccination program with your veterinarian.

Surveillance/Maintenance Strategy

- Test all:
 - Animals that become ill or are treated for BRD or other sickness—this may identify pens/pastures with additional PI animals that need to be tested.
 - Cattle that die—this may identify pens/pastures with additional PI animals that need to be tested.
 - Cattle in “problem pens”/pastures with an unusually high sickness rate—if no PI animal is found, consider testing the cattle in adjacent pens/pastures; fence-line contact with a PI animal may be the source of infection.
- If a PI animal is detected:
 - Test all cattle in that pen or pasture
 - Consider implementing the **Maximum Protection Strategy** or **Medium Protection Strategy**

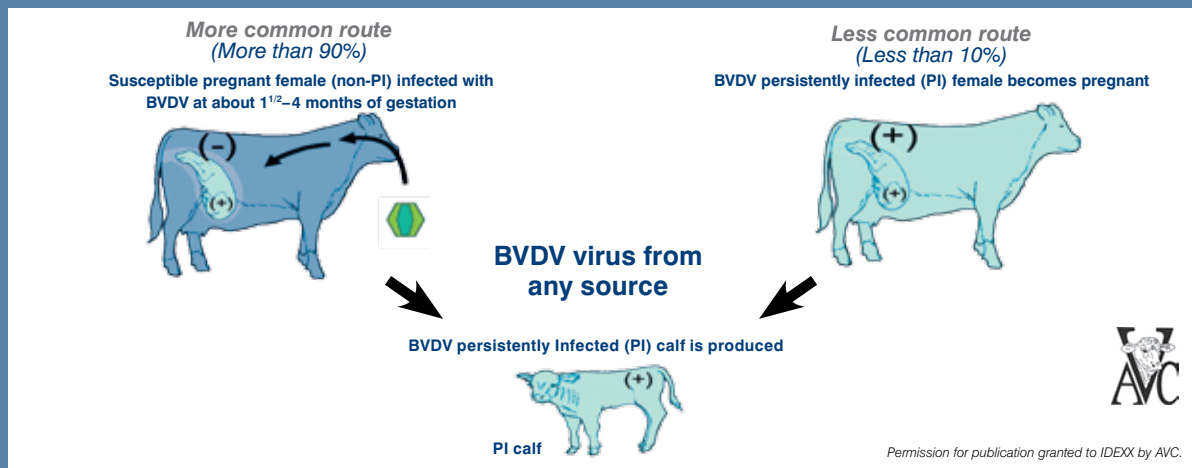
What to do with a PI animal:

Immediately remove the PI animal from the pen or pasture and isolate it away from all other cattle. Consult with your veterinarian to determine herd goals and appropriate measures. PI animals may be euthanized or sold for slaughter.

PI for life

A PI-positive animal will always be positive. On the flip side, a negative animal will never become PI, though it may still be transiently infected.

Understanding how a PI calf is created is key to developing a BVDV control strategy.



BVDV Myths

1. PI calves will be killed by modified live virus (MLV) vaccination. **FACT:** Controlled experiments have not been able to induce sickness or death in PI calves following MLV vaccination. However, case reports indicate that MLV vaccination can cause a PI animal to become sick or to die, though far less than 100% are negatively affected.
2. BVDV won't affect cattle if they are vaccinated. **FACT:** The tremendous amount of virus secreted by a PI calf can overwhelm a level of immunity that is protective under less severe exposure.
3. Calves are PI because their dam is PI. **FACT:** Recent research has shown that 7% of PI calves' dams were PI; the other 93% of calves have dams with a normal immune response to BVDV and are not persistently infected.
4. The greatest cost associated with a PI calf is the death of that calf. **FACT:** The reproductive loss associated with lower pregnancy proportions, more abortions and higher calf mortality is the greatest economic cost of PI animals.
5. A PI calf will be thin, have a rough hair coat and be a poor doer. **FACT:** While many PI animals are unthrifty, reports have indicated up to 50% will appear normal and may enter the stocker operation in excellent condition. PI calves cannot be visually identified.

IDEXX HerdChek* BVDV Antigen Test Kit

The only USDA-licensed test for detecting BVDV in PI cattle



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