



## BVD Testing – The Use of Ear Tissue Samples

The detection and removal of persistently infected or PI animals is crucial to control BVD infection and to prevent spread of the disease between farms. Whilst virus can be readily identified in blood samples from older calves, detection can be hampered in younger animals by the presence of maternal antibodies. It is now possible to look for virus in calves of any age by using ear tissue samples, where high levels of antibody are less likely. However, in animals less than 4 months of age, ear tissue samples should be tested for antibody as well as virus in case the sample is accidentally contaminated with blood during collection.

Ear tissue sample collectors and applicators are supplied by Biobest; generally tissue sampling leaves a plastic tag attached to the ear. It may be possible to provide samplers without plastic tags attached - please discuss this when ordering. Samples are taken in the same manner as applying a management tag, and sampling results in a residual 2mm hole in the ear. The ear tissue sample becomes sealed in the collector 'cup' which is sent directly to Biobest to be tested. The system is easy to use and removes blood sampling costs.

Possible testing results:

- i) virus positive & antibody negative - potential PI animal, isolate and re-test in 3 weeks time.
- ii) virus negative & antibody negative - no evidence that this animal is a PI
- iii) virus negative & antibody positive - retest as antibody may have interfered with virus testing

Occasionally no sample is found when the collector is opened; presumably the ear tissue sample is still attached to the ear. In this case no charge will be made for testing, but a further collector will have to be purchased to re-sample. The costs involved are detailed below - antibody & virus test costs remain the same as for a blood sample.

|   |   |        |
|---|---|--------|
| Ear tissue sample applicator (1 only required)                  | - | £15.00 |
| Ear tissue sample collector (1 required for each animal tested) | - | £ 3.00 |
| BVD virus test  | - | £ 4.45 |
| BVD antibody test   | - | £ 2.95 |

These prices are exclusive of VAT. For further information, please contact the Cattle Health Scheme Manager, David Kay, or one of the vets at Biobest.

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