



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

6 December 2022

Animal Health Strategy and TSE Branch
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
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Ref: Consultation on Proposed Introduction of Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) Herd Restrictions

To whom it may concern:

Mid Ulster District Council would like to take this opportunity to put forward its views in relation to the proposals detailed in the above mentioned consultation. Overall, Council is in agreement that it is necessary to find a solution to BVD and that this should start with supporting the management of the conditions within herds. However, the ultimate aim of DEARA intervention should be the total eradication of BVD that has been achieved in other countries.

With this aim in mind, Mid Ulster District Council is supportive of the proposals for the Department to restrict movements from herds that retain BVD positive animals and would also agree with the proposed 28 day 'grace period' before herds with a positive BVD test results are restricted in order to allow herd keepers time to retest or remove persistently infected (PI) animals. The Council also agrees that tackling

the issue of PI animals is also the key to finding a long lasting solution. BVD cannot persist in herds where contacts between PI animals and susceptible animals in early pregnancy do not occur. There is immense importance of identification and removal of these animals when considering BVD eradication. To address this issue the Council would recommend antibody testing of targeted groups to determine whether the group/herd has been exposed to the disease and to gain knowledge of whether or not a PI animal likely to be present.

However the Council would also highlight the importance of DEARA's careful consideration of the financial implications for farmers' prior to the implementations of any proposals. It is clear that stringent and lengthy herd restrictions has the potential to cause a devastating impact on many individual farm businesses and livelihoods, as well as presenting a threat to the industry overall. It also has to be recognised that introducing severe level of restrictions could further compound the current Cost of Living crisis.

In conclusion, it is evident that BVD poses a significant risk to Northern Ireland's livestock industry, however it is Council's view that the proposed amendments have the potential to have a negative impact on farmers and their livestock. It is clear that the industry has faced significant financial challenges in recent years and Members would like it noted that a long term solution should be sought to address the threats posed by BVD, particularly in relation to recurring cases between PI animals and susceptible animals that could be identified at earlier stages.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Córa Corry

Chairperson