

# The Many Faces Of BVD

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tissues can cause many types of birth defects. Some of these calves infected later in gestation will be born small and weak, at term or prematurely.

The BVD virus can interfere with reproduction even before conception. The BVD virus has two known effects on the cow's ovaries. The infected ovaries produce eggs of poor quality and cause the ovary to produce less progesterone than may be necessary to maintain a pregnancy.

These cows return to heat, sometimes after missing several heats. One PI in a herd can continue to expose cows to the virus, causing real disruption of a breeding program.

## Eliminating And Avoiding BVD Problems

So how can all these problems be avoided?

A three-pronged effort is required. Step one involves increasing herd resistance to BVD by a good vaccination program.

This should include use of a modified live vaccine in young stock at four to six months of age and a booster with the same type of vaccine pre-breeding. Annual or semiannual booster vaccination of cows needs to be continued in the herd with a vaccine approved by your veterinarian for your herd.

Step two will involve removing any persistently infected animals from the herd. Culturing bulk tank milk samples can determine if there are any PI cows. These tests are very sensitive, detecting one positive cow in a group of up to several hundred.

If the bulk tank test comes back positive, follow up testing will need to be completed on smaller groups and eventually on individual cows.

Calves can be tested by submitting a small piece of skin such as a notch from an ear for virus detection. This is a fairly new test, but very sensitive and can be done on calves of any age.

This makes it possible to identify those carrier calves at an early age and get them out of the herd.

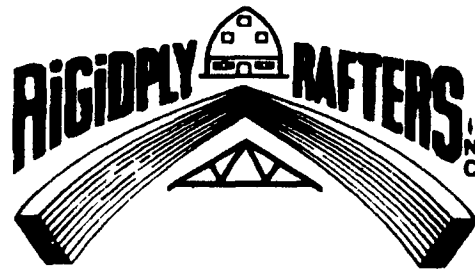
The third prong of the strategy involved not buying more BVD infected stock. Test all new stock before adding to the herd and make sure they were properly vaccinated as young stock.

Isolate new purchases in a separate facility from farm stock and be sure new stock tests negative before adding to the herd.

BVD can be a real disaster in a herd. But it is possible to get this disease out of a herd and prevent it. I continue to be surprised by the number of herds which do not vaccinate, at least not properly, for this disease.

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701 E. Linden St.  
Richland, PA 17087  
717-866-6581



1283 Joni Miller Rd.  
Oakland, MD 21550  
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701 E. Linden St., Richland, PA 17087

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