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Disease Surveillance

BVD, IBR, LEPTO, JOHNES, NEOSPORA?...know your herd status!

MSD Animal Health continues to support and highly subsidise the Beef and Dairy health check schemes. We recommend to all our clients that regular testing and monitoring for the above diseases is carried out yearly. Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD), Leptospirosis (Lepto), Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR), Johnes and Neospora can all lead to severe production losses if they are not found and controlled.

HOW TO TEST?

Dairy – regular milk samples (bulk tank or individual)

Beef – blood sampling – up to 10 blood samples are taken from unvaccinated young stock aged 9-18 months and can easily be carried out on day 2 of a TB test.

WHAT DOES IT COST?

MSD Animal Health is offering subsidised BVD, IBR and Lepto testing for up to 10 animals costing only £20 + VAT for 10 blood samples to be taken and analysed. Don't miss out on this excellent opportunity to monitor and improve your herd health.

WHAT IF I FIND DISEASE?

Positive findings will allow us to discuss control and possible eradication options for these debilitating diseases. This may involve further inexpensive testing (e.g. Tag & Testing for BVD) and possible vaccination; BVD, Lepto & IBR can all be effectively controlled with cost-effective vaccines which are easy to administer.

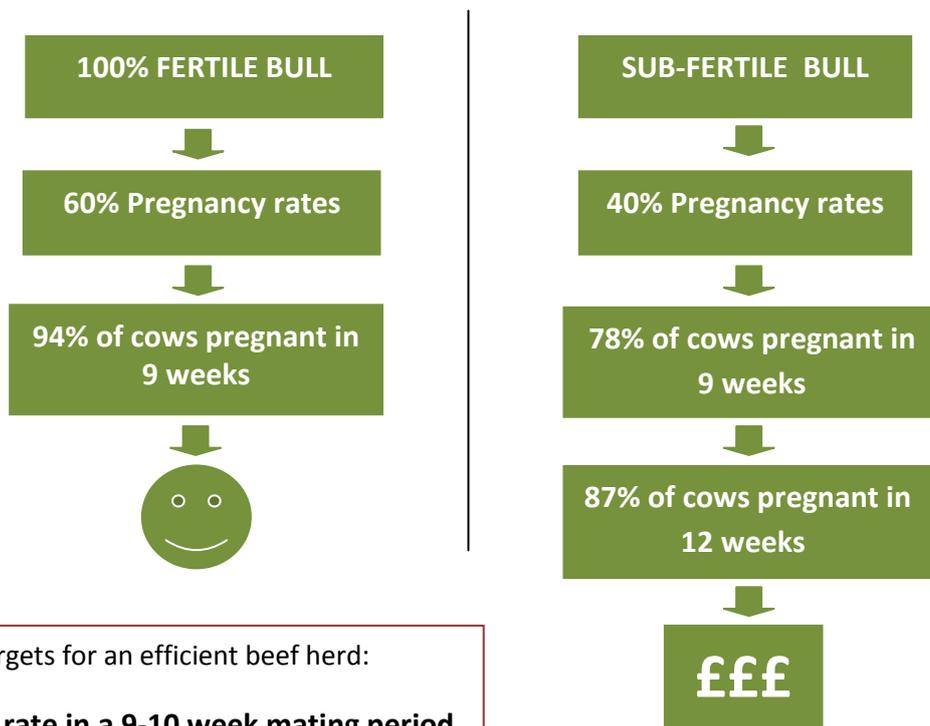


Bull Testing Time

Bull fertility is often overlooked and unchecked by both beef and dairy units. Although complete infertility is rare in bulls, **subfertility** is common and will be costly; 20% of bulls are sub-fertile! We strongly advise fertility testing your bulls annually, 6-8 weeks prior to breeding to ensure good fertility and pregnancy rates.

WHY SHOULD YOU TEST YOUR BULL?

Example: A bull run with 40-50 cows for a 9 week breeding period (target)

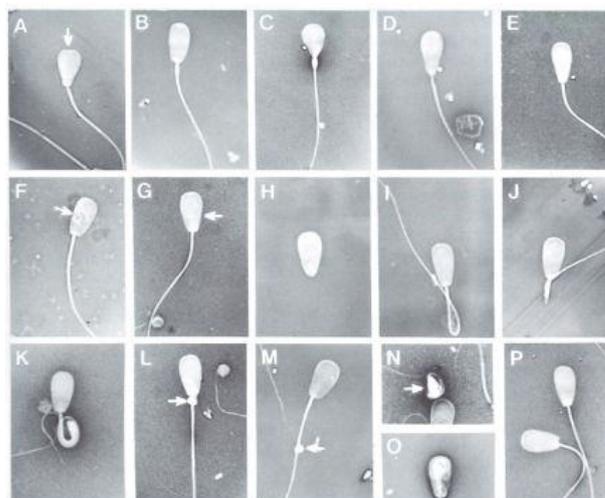


Fertility targets for an efficient beef herd:

- 95% preg rate in a 9-10 week mating period**
- 65%+ cows calving in first 3 weeks**

Veterinary pre-breeding bull fertility checks:

- > 6-8 weeks prior to breeding (*annually*)
- > Physical examination of penis and testicles
- > On-farm semen collection and microscopic examination for sperm motility & viability.
- > Official BCVA certificate can be produced if required (e.g. pre-sale or insurance purposes).



COST = £100 per bull +VAT

Semen morphology is complex and variable and is the main cause for sub-fertility

Game Keeping: Spring jobs

With the shooting season behind us, and Easter just round the corner it's time to plan and look forward to the summer months and prepare for the new arrivals. Whether you're running a small syndicate or large commercial shoot spring is an important time of the year for all game farmers, good management can help lay the foundations for a successful summer rearing and lead to a profitable shooting season.

April will bring the start of hatching and a set of new challenges. Be aware of early health problems in chicks so stay vigilant. Dull, weak chicks should be sent to us for post mortem examination as diseases such as Yolk Sac infection and Rota virus may be present.

Breeding Stock

Research by the GWCT (Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust) has shown that hand-reared released stock that survives the shooting season struggle to breed well in the spring. Many keepers will stop hopper feeding and plough in cover crops, this abrupt depletion of food and habitat leads to poor chick survival. There are three key areas of spring management that should be considered by all keepers:

Predation control:

Effective control of predators in the spring is vital. Birds are most vulnerable straight after the end of the season and during the nesting time.

(For more information on effective and legal control visit the [BASC](#) or [GWCT](#) websites, there are new laws on Buzzard control!)

Spring feeding:

Many keepers will collect in the hoppers after the shooting season has finished, leaving released birds to try and adapt to a wild diet. Consider supplementing their diet to support laying and chick hatching.

Nesting habitat:

Consider leaving cover crops in and manage hedgerows to provide good nesting cover and brood rearing sites. Hens will sit for 25 days so predation cover is critical.

If you rear your own birds, breeding hens should have been caught up well before now and you should be staying vigilant for illness, such as *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (Bulgy eye). Regular worming is essential to maintain bird health and improve laying performance.



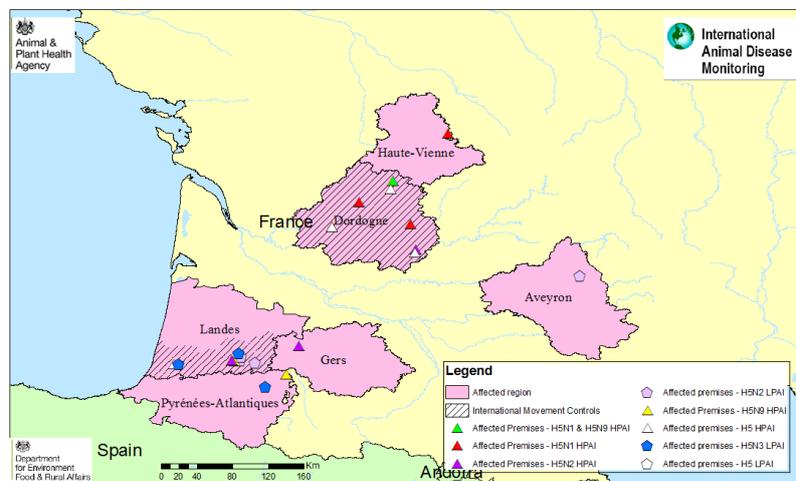
Cleaning and Disinfecting

It is essential to get cleaning and disinfecting at this time of year (ideally using pressure washers and approved disinfectant). Rearer's should be washing down their sheds and disinfecting pens for new chick arrivals, paying particular attention to the corners, feeding hoppers, drinkers and heaters. Those that rear on bare ground can consider using lime or other proprietary disinfectant powders within the pens.

Keepers should be cleaning and disinfecting their release pen drinkers and feeders, making sure any broken parts are replaced. Preparation now will save time in the future when feeding and poult health is more important.

Buying chicks

You should all be aware of the outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI H5N2) over the winter in the South West of France. Mainly in fattening ducks. This area hasn't seen any new outbreaks since early February and the whole region is gradually culling and re-stocking all poultry, fowl and game. You should



consider carefully before ordering your chicks from France, the risks are high, ordering British hatched chicks will be safer. Additionally, all public ferry companies have recently put a ban on the transport of ANY live birds from DOC to Poults, this is due to a video release by the League Against Cruel Sports showing the process of laying and hatching in Northern France. So my advice is to order and buy British chicks to guarantee them in time.



Game Bird Health Talk

'From Egg to Peg'



Whether you're a large rearer or just put down a few birds for the season, we'd like to invite you to join us for an evening talk and discussion on game bird health and husbandry.

7pm Wednesday 6th April
The Langton Arms, Tarrant Monkton

Dinner & Drink provided

Please ring the office to confirm and book your place