



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.

Ear tissue sample collectors and applicators are supplied by Biobest; generally tissue sampling leaves a plastic tag attached to the ear. 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- potential PI animal, isolate and retest in 3 weeks time.
- ii) virus negative - no evidence that this animal is a PI

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 resample. The costs involved are detailed below:

Ear tissue sample applicator (1 only required)	-	£18.00
Ear tissue sample collector (1 required for each animal tested, minimum 5)	-	£ 3.00
BVD virus test for Health Scheme members	-	£ 5.25
BVD virus test for non members	-	£ 5.50

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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