

Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR),

Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR) is a highly contagious, infectious respiratory disease that is caused by Bovine Herpesvirus-1 (BHV-1). It can affect young and older cattle. In addition to causing respiratory disease, this virus can cause conjunctivitis, abortions, encephalitis, and generalised systemic infections.

Incidence and costs

Around 70% of dairy herds and 40% of beef herds in the UK test positive for IBR. The cost of an outbreak of IBR in a 100 cow herd can easily reach £5000. Milk loss, dead animals, abortions and treatment costs will account for this.

Disease mechanism

After introduction into a herd signs can start occurring from 2-6 days. In classic cases of IBR most problems will occur in the upper respiratory tract of the cows causing the typical nasal discharge and pneumonia signs. The initial infection by the IBR virus can then be complicated by bacteria or cause a viraemia leading to abortions or even death.

Not all animals will shed the disease, some of them will turn in to life long carriers and be a potential source of flare ups of the disease in the future.



Severe case of IBR

Treatment

Individual sick animals need to be treated with antibiotics to prevent or fight secondary infections. Even more important is to give these animals Finadyne or Metacam to reduce the symptoms and ensure the cows keep eating. In case of an outbreak it is recommended to vaccinate the whole herd. This is best done with an intra nasal vaccine to get the quickest protection there where it matters.

Prevention

Biosecurity is very important, bought in cattle are the main source of the virus, virtually all farms with an IBR problem have bought it in. The main source of the virus is not animals with disease but animals that have recovered from disease but still have the virus in their body (carriers.) To monitor IBR levels on your farm the FarmVets SouthWest infectious disease monitor is a very valuable tool.

For most farms vaccination is probably the safest way to protect their valuable stock as almost no farm is 100% closed. Vaccination with a marker makes it possible to tell the difference between vaccinated animals and ones that got naturally infected.



Intranasal vaccination during an outbreak