

IBR aware

James Burdge's appointment as herdsman at Jon Bult's family-run dairy unit at Collum Farm, near Weston Super Mare, Somerset, two years ago brought fresh eyes to the business.

Recognising some cows had mild symptoms of IBR, Mr Burdge instigated a bulk milk test to confirm IBR's presence in the milking herd of 150 Holstein and 80 Jersey cows.

"Having had experience of IBR at a former employer's dairy farm I was aware it was possibly rumbling along in the background here," explains Mr Burdge.

"It's hard to put a finger on it but some cows were just a bit off colour and had one or two symptoms of IBR such as runny noses and weeping eyes. It was more noticeable in the Holsteins which are housed the longest.

"The bulk milk test came back positive for IBR antibodies. With our vet Corein Selles of FarmVets South West, we started vaccinating the milking herd in autumn 2011.

"As we are moving steadily

Even if you are a closed herd and good bio-security can keep IBR out, it is still useful to monitor

COREIN SELLES

IBR management

- ▶▶ Can affect all herds including closed
- ▶▶ Bulk milk tests can confirm level
- ▶▶ Think about vaccination and bio-security
- ▶▶ Intranasal or intramuscular options
- ▶▶ Use of live marker vaccine option
- ▶▶ Consult vet about herd health plan
- ▶▶ Monitor after vaccination routinely

towards rearing our own replacements and want to capitalise on a flexible milk supply contract, we decided last year to begin vaccinating the whole herd including youngstock for IBR every six months."

Protection

According to vet Mr Selles, the whole herd approach is important to protect young heifers coming through the system. "It's still a flying herd buying in replacements and despite moves to buy in from herds with a known disease status wherever possible the risk of bringing in IBR is still there.

"Young heifers are vaccinated between six and 12 months old, depending when they are born, to offer protection before breeding. Heifers vaccination then falls into sync with the milking herd which is treated ever six months," explains Mr Selles.

"Bulk milk samples are used to monitor the situation as part of FarmVet South West's quarterly Infectious Disease Monitor service. IBR may not be as big a problem as in northern counties, but all farms need to consider their status," he advises.

Recognising the signs of infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR), using bulk milk tests to confirm infection within a herd, and selecting the most appropriate vaccination plan is key to one Somerset dairy farm's plans to rear its own replacements.

Managing IBR keeps herd on the right track



Farmer Jon Bult, herdsman James Burdge and vet Corein Selles have implemented a vaccination programme to help combat IBR.

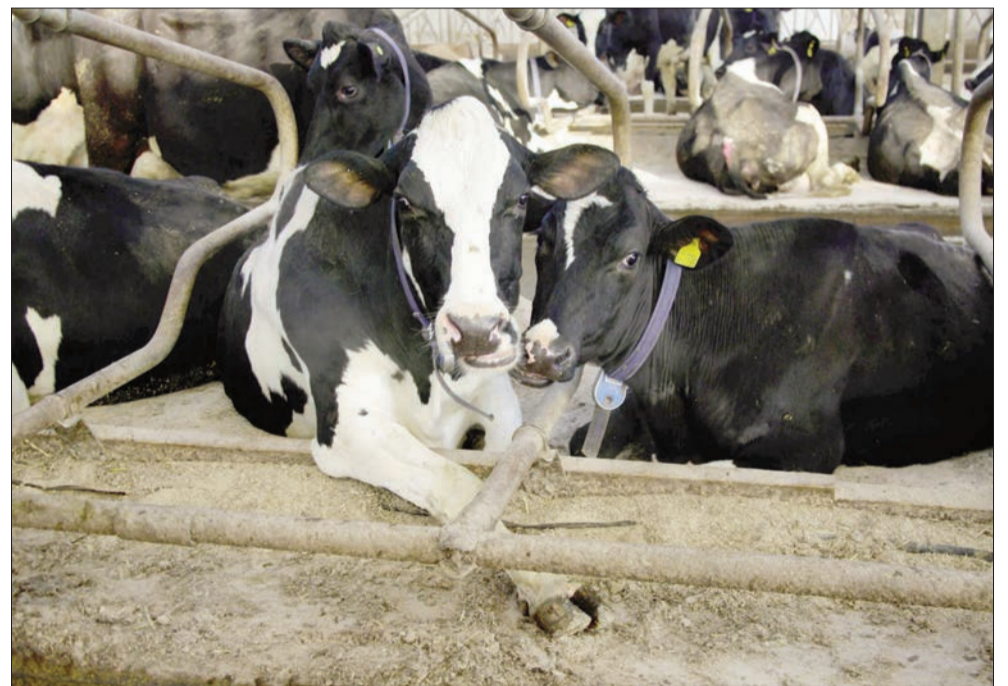
Collum Farm facts

- ▶▶ 150 Holstein and 80 Jersey milkers
- ▶▶ Moving to rearing all replacements
- ▶▶ IBR challenge confirmed 2011
- ▶▶ Bulk milk tests post vaccination
- ▶▶ Moved to six monthly vaccination in 2012
- ▶▶ Includes heifers before breeding

"Even if you are a closed herd and good bio-security can keep IBR out, it is still useful to monitor. As I've seen what IBR can do to a naive herd vaccination is often recommended."

For H.J. Bult and Son, control of IBR is helping to achieve the goal of rearing replacement heifers. These are mainly required for the Holstein portion of the herd, suggests Mr Burdge.

"Our system sees Jerseys calve in spring, making use of an early flush of grass. Holsteins calve down in July, August and September, increasing milk in the tank when



Holsteins at Collum Farm average about 8,000 litres. Vaccination against IBR has helped protect yields.

prices benefit from higher seasonality payments."

Averages

Jerseys average 5,000 litres/cow and are focused on grazed forage, while Holsteins level at 8,000 litres/cow from a

largely TMR diet, he explains.

In future the farm, which supplies a liquid contract, hopes to benefit from extra income derived from constituent payments for butterfat and protein of the Jersey milk in spring.

"IBR has an impact on milk

yield and fertility," explains Mr Burdge. "We used to see the odd cow looking lethargic and these would often be the ones reluctant to come in the parlour. Now we vaccinate, that should be a thing of the past."

AWARENESS

DIAGNOSIS

VACCINATION

IBR Aware is brought to you by MSD Animal Health, manufacturers of Bovilis IBR Marker Live

