

BVDV PCR Testing

ABOUT: Bovine viral diarrhea virus (BVDV) suppresses the immune system, making cattle more susceptible to other infections. Persistently infected (PI) cattle continuously shed the virus and are the main source of infection within herds. BVDV causes major economic losses due to reduced herd health, reproductive issues, and decreased productivity.

SYMPTOMS: Signs of acute infection may include fever, lethargy, nasal/ocular discharge, diarrhea, oral lesions, decreased appetite, and lowered milk production. PI cattle may appear healthy but spread the virus lifelong.

PREVENTION: Eliminating PI cattle is key to controlling BVDV. Regular diagnostic testing and biosecurity practices are essential to prevent introduction and spread of the virus in herds.

GETTING TESTED: PCR testing is a fast, highly accurate method for detecting BVDV in blood samples.

- Preferred specimen: 2 mL blood collected in a purple top (EDTA) tube for plasma.
- Alternative specimen: 2 mL whole blood from a red or yellow top tube.
- Ship samples overnight on cold packs (do not place tubes in direct contact with ice packs).

A positive PCR result indicates the presence of BVDV but does not by itself confirm a PI animal. To confirm PI status, the same animal must be retested in 3-4 weeks. Animals that remain positive are PI; those that test negative on retest had a transient infection.

BVDV PCR tests are processed and results reported on Wednesday.

