

Advice 09-2014 of the Scientific Committee of the FASFC on the draft royal decree concerning the control of bovine viral diarrhoea.

The Scientific Committee has assessed the draft royal decree concerning the control of bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD).

The Scientific Committee supports the initiative to provide a legal basis to the BVD control plan since this viral disease has serious consequences in terms of animal health, animal welfare and economic efficiency of cattle farming.

However, the Scientific Committee notes that the proposed act is little ambitious with regard to the provision of measures to control the main risks.

The key factors in the successful control of BVD include the rapid detection and removal or slaughtering of immunotolerant, persistently infected (IPI) calves and cattle, applying a strict purchasing policy whereby IPI cattle or cattle with unknown BVD status do not participate in trade and monitoring of BVD virus circulation in the farms. Since there do not exist sufficient biosecurity measures in the field which guarantee that virus not be spread, it appears that the isolation or in quarantine placement of IPI cattle on the herds is little or not efficacious in the control of BVD. These IPI animals pose a very high risk for BVD virus transmission. There is a risk that the control program, as it is described in the draft act, will not provide enough concrete results in the short to medium term, thereby causing a loss of motivation of farmers.

The Scientific Committee is of the opinion that the royal decree in its current form (version 25) offers little guarantee for the effective control of BVD because of the absence or lack of rigorous imposition of risk mitigation measures.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french, respectively under the section “Wetenschappelijk Comité/Adviezen” and “Comité scientifique/Avis”.