

The Department is modifying its approach regarding access to PRRS vaccine and regarding the methodology by which herds restricted arising from PRRS infection may be derestricted.

Notification

PRRS remains a notifiable disease. Any suspicion – based on clinical findings or arising from laboratory test results – must be notified to DAFM.

Vaccination

Previously PRRS vaccine was available only to herds that could demonstrate exposure to the virus. This meant that vaccine was only available to restricted herds.

Now vaccine can be made available, under licence, to pig herds regardless of their PRRS status.

Application for licence to use PRRS vaccine in any herd must be submitted to DAFM by the herd's PVP (as was the case previously).

Before applying for the vaccines the herd must ascertain its PRRS status by testing 30 pigs selected at random from groups aged 9 – 16 weeks old; thus demonstrating if the herds has been exposed or not to PRRS. A copy of the tests should be submitted along with the application.

Herds with no evidence of PRRS infection

1. **Will not be restricted**
2. Will only be issued with licences for the inactivated vaccine

Herds with evidence of PRRS infection

1. **Will be restricted** until such times as they meet the de-restriction criteria outlined below.
2. Have the option of applying for live or inactivated vaccines

Restriction

Herds restricted for PRRS may not export live pigs for breeding or slaughter to other EU member states. Thus if a pig farmer is sending pig to a factory in the North and discovers he has PRRS he can no longer send these pigs to that factory.

In certain circumstances, some herds that test positive when ascertaining their status will not need to be restricted, as despite having positive serological titres, there have been no clinical

occurrences of PRRS in the previous 6 months and the herd meets the conditions outlined below.

Herds that are restricted for PRRS may only move live pigs, carcasses of pigs and slurry under licence. These licences are issued by the DVO and must be renewed on a regular basis. All restricted herds should therefore be applying on a regular basis for licences.

The goal of restriction is to control the spread of the disease. Herds can be derestricted if they get the disease under control. The criteria used to determine this are outlined below.

De-Restriction Criteria

Previously herds needed to de-stock or become serologically free. Now herds can be derestricted if they have no clinical occurrences of PRRS in the previous 6 months.

All in all, to be de-restricted herds must meet the following conditions

The herds PVP must be in a position to state that there has been no clinical evidence of PRRS for the previous 6 months.

The herds must have a serological profile of 30 pigs. Some herds were restricted years ago so they very well might be serologically free at this stage anyway. This is to provide a serological profile of the herds that have been restricted. The samples are to be sent to Virology Section CVRL Backweston. The decision to de-restrict will be based on a combination of the blood result and also on production indices etc; even if a positive result is returned it may still be possible to be derestricted

A VI will conduct an inspection of the farm in question and also examine the following production indices which should have been stable for the previous 9 months (3 sets, as they are usually compiled every 3 months)

- Numbers of stillbirths and mummified pigs (Increased in affected herds)
- Pre-weaning mortality percentage (Increased in affected herds)
- Total pigs/litter (Decreased in affected herds)
- Alive pigs/litter (Decreased in affected herds)

Medicine usage will also be taken into account. Again, stability in the usage of medicines will be the key factor taken into consideration.

DAFM HQ will assist the regional office with the de-restriction based on the reports from the VI and PVP.