

# Premium Cattle Health Scheme



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## Johne's Disease Control and Eradication Programme

- Review herd hygiene and biosecurity in relation to the rules of the scheme.
- Arrange for your vet to test all animals over two years of age. Milk samples can be used to replace blood in the tests for Johne's disease.
- Remove reactors and the offspring of any cows that react from the breeding herd.
- Repeat the herd test each year until a clear test is achieved. [For maximum progress the testing interval can be reduced to six months.]
- In the short term the objective is to reduce the financial losses caused by this disease.
- Eradication and demonstration of freedom from infection will take years and may not be achievable in some situations.
- Once a clear herd test is achieved, providing a period of at least 12 months has elapsed since the last reactor was removed, the herd has passed the first qualifying test.

## Johne's Disease Monitored Free Programme

- Review and upgrade herd biosecurity programme to meet the rules of the scheme (see rules summary or CHCS technical document).
- Test all animals of two years of age and older.
- Where all animals test negative this is a clear first qualifying herd test.
- The second qualifying test should be carried out twelve months later. A clear test at that time confers accredited status except where infection has been identified previously or a herd has been established for less than 3 years, in which case three clear tests at annual intervals are required.
- Once accredited as "Johne's Disease Monitored Free" the herd tests may be carried out every second year providing all cull cows and animals not born in the herd are tested in the intervening year.



**CAN YOU  
AFFORD  
TO TAKE  
THE RISK**

## PCHS

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Premium  
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## Johne's Disease

Quick Reference Guide



## Quick Reference Guide

### A guide to SAC's Premium Cattle Health Scheme for Johne's Disease

#### Why is Johne's Disease important?

- Johne's disease causes adult cattle to waste and die. Clinical signs of diarrhoea and weight loss usually occur in cattle over 2 years of age. In heavily infected herds this leads to a high rate of wastage in cattle at 3 to 5 years old.
- Johne's disease affects other ruminant species
- Johne's disease has been found in rabbits
- The bacterium that causes Johne's disease (*Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis*) has been linked to the human disease of the bowel, Crohn's disease. While no direct link between the two diseases has yet been shown to exist, both the Food Standards Agency and DEFRA advise the dairy industry to take precautionary measures to minimise the number of Johne's disease organisms entering milk.

#### How is Johne's Disease transmitted?

- The infectious agent is shed in large numbers in faeces and can be found in colostrum and milk.
- Animals are infected by ingesting the agent.
- Young animals are most susceptible to infection.
- Infection is usually introduced to a herd by purchasing infected breeding stock including bulls.
- Semen can be infected in the later stages of the disease and this is a low risk for disease transmission.

*Note that this document is a guide to the disease and the testing programmes. It does not cover all testing outcomes or variations in testing programmes for the control and eradication of Johne's disease.*



#### How is Johne's Disease Controlled?

For herds that show no evidence of Johne's disease there is an accreditation programme that safeguards freedom from disease. For herds where the disease is present there is a control and eradication programme to remove the disease from the herd.

To determine the best approach for your herd we recommend that you discuss your objectives for the herd with your veterinary surgeon. At this meeting the herd biosecurity can be reviewed and upgraded to meet with the scheme requirements and a testing schedule drawn up to determine the disease status of the herd.

A testing programme is only one aspect of control, and improving hygiene within the herd to reduce the amount of faeces from adults that young calves are exposed to is essential. Practices such as feeding pooled colostrum or waste milk are high risk and must be avoided. As the organism can survive in the environment for prolonged periods and rabbits can be infected a whole farm approach to control is required. Tests on the live animal tend to detect infection in the later stages of the disease and infected animals may test negative for several years before testing positive. All this means that control and eradication is difficult and is usually a lengthy procedure.

Vaccination may be useful in heavily infected herds. Vaccination will not remove the infection from the herd and is not recommended for use in herds that are selling breeding stock.



#### Key facts

- Johne's disease is an important cause of financial loss to British beef and dairy farmers.
- The bacterium that causes Johne's disease may be a danger to human health
- SAC provides an effective Johne's Disease Screening and Eradication Programme for infected herds
- The Johne's Disease Monitored Free Programme provides assurance and the status "Johne's Disease Monitored Free"
- The Scheme is licensed by CHCS and all tests are accredited by UKAS to ISO17025.



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Please send me the Premium Cattle Health Scheme membership pack.

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