

Management of Johne's Disease: Main Messages

Be aware and take action

- Johne's Disease adversely affects physical and economic performance of the herd.
- Build a Johne's management plan with your vet as part of your Herd Health Plan.
- Define your objectives: every farm is different.
- Build a flexible, feasible, long term strategy.
- Reduce disease risk using a combination of farm management and testing. Test results will help you to understand your herd's level of infection and to define your goals.

Testing and management strategies

- Build a "picture" of your farm and know your herd disease status by testing all adult breeding cows and bulls in the herd.
- Adopt a risk based approach to dealing with individual animals based on test results and other information such as dam history. Colour coded ear tagging of individuals is helpful.
- Formulate a plan, in advance, on how to deal with animals testing positive for infection.
- Management strategies should have a 3-pronged approach:
 - 1) minimising the risk of transferring infection from infected cows to calves
 - 2) taking steps to avoid retaining infected animals in the herd
 - 3) avoiding bringing infected animals into a herd.
- Consider the best time to test if testing once a year. Don't test for Johne's within 3 months *after* carrying out your TB intradermal skin test.
- Acting upon test results quickly allows the sale of cull cows at good market value.

Keep on top of Johne's

- Keep goals realistic: Management and control to a low level of infection may be more achievable than eradication.
- Do not become complacent, even when the disease appears to be under control.
- If you have "only" one or two clinical cases, the likelihood is that you have a significant number of sub-clinical cases.
- If you don't do anything, the situation is not going to improve. It is likely to get worse!
- Consider Health scheme membership: This provides an additional source of advice and lower per head testing costs.

Consider the role of the farm environment

- After management, the soil environment may play a significant role in disease persistence.
- MAP prefers to live in wet acidic soils rich in organic matter and available iron.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that liming or improving drainage may reduce survival of MAP in the soil but further research is needed on how effective this is for Johne's control.
- Managing your activities around higher risk areas (for example where Johne's positive animals have been grazed and soil environments are favourable) and liming these soils to maintain a more neutral pH may be worthwhile.
- Wherever possible, fence off water courses and provide clean troughed water.