

FACT SHEET

Bovine Johne's Disease Management



WHAT IS IT?

Johne's Disease (JD) is a fatal infectious wasting disease of cattle, sheep, goats, alpaca and deer caused by bacterial infection. It is a notifiable disease in Victoria. Bovine Johne's disease (BJD) is caused by the C strain of the bacteria, which affects mainly cattle but also goats, deer and camelids. While evidence indicates BJD is endemic in the dairy industry in south-eastern Australia, it is relatively uncommon in beef herds but will establish and spread readily if the herd is exposed to infected animals or pastures.

WHY MANAGE THE DISEASE AT FARM LEVEL?

There are a number of reasons why we should manage BJD on a national level for trade; however, the disease also impacts producers at farm level:

- ▶ If left uncontrolled the rate of infection in the herd can increase significantly.
- ▶ It can cause wasting and death in your herd, especially during times of stress (e.g. lactation, drought).
- ▶ Stud producers can be particularly affected by BJD due to loss of valuable stock, reputation and clients.
- ▶ Producers' ability to freely trade interstate is also limited due to the prevalence of BJD in Victoria.
- ▶ See the PDF Bovine Johne's Disease resource for further detail on the disease.

CHANGES TO THE BJD STRATEGIC PLAN

A review of the National BJD Strategic Plan 2012-2020 undertaken in 2015 concluded with a change in the BJD strategic plan. Through extensive discussion with Australian Cattle Industries (Australian Dairy Farmers, Australian Live Exporters' Council, Australian Lot Feeders' Association, the Australian Registered Cattle Breeders' Association and Cattle Council Australia) concluded that the plan needed to be changed because of evolving practices, reduced funding and the growing influence of biosecurity considerations. The new plan outlines a management plan for working with cattle production conditions. It is important to note that the following information is a management plan.

NEW BJD MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The original concept of zones (free, protected, managed) relied on surveillance which was not cost effective and therefore zones are NOT part of the new approach.

The system has been replaced with a deregulated approach which places responsibility on individual producers and voluntary implementation of good biosecurity practices.

Risk Assessment Tools

Voluntary tools for assessing and managing the risk of BJD have been developed by industry. The Johne's Beef Assurance Score (J-BAS) is a tool for risk profiling in the beef industry whereas the JD Dairy score (JDDS) is available for dairy producers.

Vaccination

Cattle producers are encouraged to work with their veterinarian to manage BJD on their property and to vaccinate their herds with Silirum if BJD is present. This is an inactivated (killed) vaccine which requires a one-off dose and can be used as a tool to complement on farm disease management practices. Consult with your vet and relevant Department before using this vaccine. Follow the label requirements for use and permanent identification of individual vaccinates.

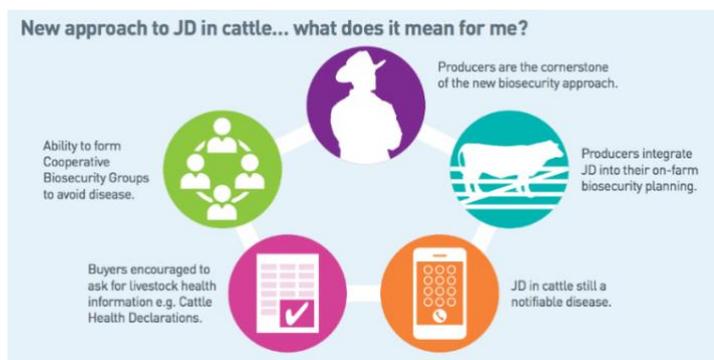


Image provided by Animal Health Australia

MANAGEMENT AREA

There are no longer JD management areas in Australia apart from WA and NT who have indicated they wish to maintain border controls. Beef producers in Victoria should manage the risk of BJD entering their herds through prior risk assessment of any animals that are to be agisted or purchased. Always ask for a National Cattle Health Declaration when purchasing new animals.

CATTLE MARKET ASSURANCE PROGRAM

Herd status including CattleMAP is no longer applicable. Beef and dairy producers can achieve market advantage by using either the J-BAS or JDDS tools. Existing CattleMAP herds will transition to a J-BAS or JDDS score of 8 – the highest assurance level. Maintaining this level also requires a biosecurity plan monitored by a veterinarian and regular testing.

BEEF INDUSTRY APPROACH

The national beef population has a very low level of JD. Reducing contact with dairy cattle on the same property greatly reduces the risk factor for infection of beef herds with JD. Only buy dairy cattle from herds enrolled in CattleMAP, that is with a JDDS score of 8 or above.

Tools available to the beef industry:

- ▶ Johne's Beef Assurance Score (J-BAS) – a risk profiling tool
- ▶ JD biosecurity checklist
- ▶ The National Cattle Health Declaration

DAIRY INDUSTRY APPROACH

JD is more prevalent in the dairy industry. The Australian Dairy industry focuses on the JD Dairy Score (JDDS) as an industry qualitative risk assessment.

The sector also aims to promote good calf hygiene and biosecurity management to minimize risk of product contamination.

3 Step Calf rearing plan:

- ▶ Calves to be reared as replacement heifers or bulls must be removed from their mothers and the calving area within 12 hours of birth.
- ▶ The calf rearing area, including paddocks, must be separate from areas used by adult cattle and not take drainage from areas used by adult cattle.

- ▶ The paddocks used by calves between weaning and 12 months of age must not have had any adult cattle (older than 2 years) run on them in the last 12 months.

TAKE HOME MESSAGES:

- ▶ BJD is a notifiable disease in Victoria. Phone your vet, local DPI or the Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 657 888 if you suspect BJD.
- ▶ The beef sector and the dairy sector have different approaches to BJD management.
- ▶ Management of BJD is the responsibility of individual producers and tools for developing farm biosecurity plans and risk management are available.
- ▶ A vaccine is also available under authority for herds where BJD is present.

FNF ASSISTANCE

The BJD Financial and Non-Financial assistance package ceased on 1st July 2016 and financial assistance is no longer available to beef producers whose herds are quarantined due to BJD. However, JD counsellors are available to beef producers throughout Australia for rural counselling and general advice pertaining to JD.

TRADING INTERSTATE

There are no entry requirements specifically related to BJD for cattle entering Victoria from other states or territories. Cattle must be identified with a NLIS tag and be accompanied by a completed National Vendor Declaration (NVD).

Entry requirements should be obtained from the relevant authority in the destination state or territory. Cattle owners are strongly encouraged to seek assurances about the health of any livestock being introduced to their property by seeking a properly completed National Cattle Health Declaration from vendors.

OBLIGATIONS IF BJD IS SUSPECTED OR DIAGNOSED

BJD remains a Notifiable Disease in Victoria. Although Agriculture Victoria must be notified of a suspicion or diagnosis of BJD, no further regulation will be applied. There will be no restriction on movement of livestock from the property.

If you suspect your cattle may be infected with BJD, contact your local Agriculture Victoria office or telephone Agriculture Victoria on 136 186.

For more information, please contact Stock Sense by email on stocksense@vff.org.au

FURTHER LINKS

New South Wales Department of Primary Industries

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/beef-cattle/health-and-disease/bacterial-diseases/bjd>

Animal Health Australia

https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/BJD-Framework-Document_final.pdf

Dairy Australia

<https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/animal-management-and-milk-quality/animal-health/bovine-johnes-disease#.Ydf1aZpBw2x>

Department of Agriculture Victoria

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/animal-diseases/beef-and-dairy-cattle/bovine-johnes-disease#h2-4>

Farm Biosecurity

<https://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/toolkit/>

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