

Take effective and logical routes to Johne's control

Where are you on the Johne's journey?

Johne's control mechanisms for all herds need to be sufficient to detect and prevent re-emergence of the disease. Fortunately, Johne's disease control plans have come a long way in the past few years thanks to a number of industry initiatives.

text **Karen Wright**

Working with vets, NMR has developed comprehensive milk test services that are available to all producers. Depending on the status of the herd, this may involve little more than routine surveillance or it may mean a period of quarterly cow milk tests.

Set out simply, Figure 1 shows a logical approach to dealing with Johne's. "The first stage of this journey is to establish the Johne's status of the herd and then implement a control or surveillance plan," says NMR's Healthcheck manager Steve West.

"We need to know if there are opportunities for Johne's to enter the herd or to spread within the herd so an assessment of the disease risk is an important starting point. Modules are

built into schemes such as MyHealthyHerd to make sure these assessments are comprehensive yet simple to follow." Following this assessment is a 30-cow screen. This is targeted at the animals most likely to be affected by the disease. Age, cow health and production will influence this selection and the most vulnerable cows can be identified by the vet or by using NMR's new auto 30-cow screen that bases its selection on the cow's recent milk records and management data.

"We emphasise the need for Johne's results to be discussed with the vet to determine the route ahead," adds Mr West. "If no disease is found in repeated 30-cow screens then a control plan and the routine 30-cow screen

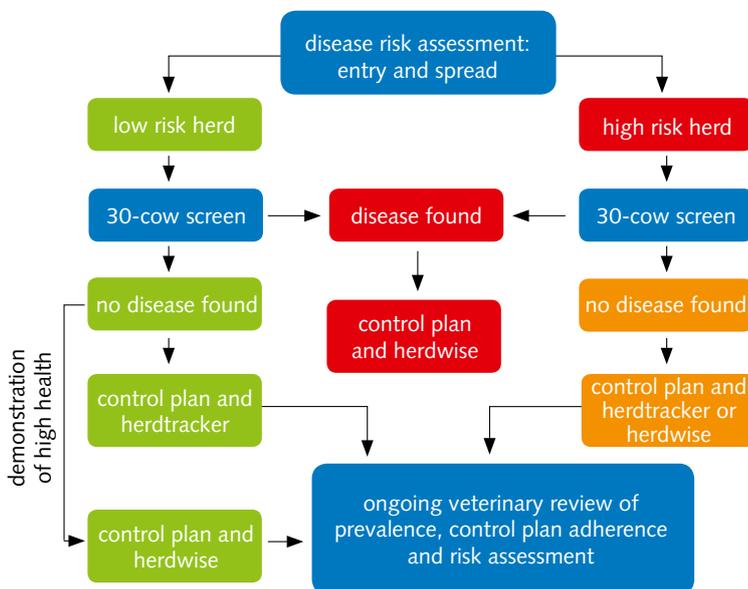


Steve West

surveillance service HerdTracker may be recommended. If disease is found a higher level control plan that involves screening all cows routinely may be the route ahead. Herds wishing to demonstrate high health status may also wish to follow this route."

"The testing strategy and the control programme will be dependent on many factors and should be decided in consultation between the producer and their vet," says DairyCo vet Karen Bond. "It is crucial to have vet involvement from the outset to decide on the most appropriate course of action and to provide help in interpreting test results – an area that can otherwise be very confusing for producers."

Figure 1: Johne's strategy diagram



CHeCS accredited

Steve West adds that producers can have their own goals and those wishing to sell cattle may wish to demonstrate a higher level of control. "If a producer has aspirations to be CHeCS accredited then they will have to continue to carry out routine tests across the herd," he says.

"Alternatively, some producers will be monitoring Johne's purely for the well-being of their herd. In this case, a herd that has been on Herdwise and screening all cows routinely but has had repeated negative test results for two years may, in agreement with their vet, reduce the level of screening to auto 30-cow quarterly tests. This all depends on biosecurity measures in place on the farm and on the level of infection originally detected in the herd." |