

Time Running Out to keep Johne's Score

Commercial beef producers are being urged to get a farm biosecurity plan in place by 30 June 2017 in order to maintain a high Johne's Beef Assurance Score (J-BAS) and protect against Johne's disease (JD). The J-BAS is a voluntary risk profiling tool developed for use in the new approach to JD in beef cattle.

Currently under the transitional arrangement, all beef herds from JD-free herds from South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland and herds that qualified as beef only from Tasmania and Victoria have been allocated a J-BAS of 7. To maintain J-BAS 7 a producer must implement an on-farm biosecurity plan, oversighted by a veterinarian, by 30 June 2017 and conduct a triennial Check Test.

If producers in these areas do not wish to undertake testing or utilise a veterinary adviser to oversight their on-farm biosecurity plan, they can still maintain a score of 6 by implementing their own biosecurity plan before 30 June 2017.

If nothing is done by producers by 30 June 2017, their herds' J-BAS will drop to 0, the same status as infected and suspected herds.

After 30 June 2017, producers will need to have a biosecurity plan in place for five years before they are again eligible for the higher scores of 6 or more.

A biosecurity plan for J-BAS should take into account a general biosecurity plan that covers the farm for exotic and endemic diseases as well as JD specific practices like the risk from sheep with JD and high-risk cattle like dairy cattle. When buying cattle look for the Cattle Health Declaration where the J-BAS is recorded along with information on a whole suite of diseases that can impact your business.

Livestock Biosecurity Network has developed a biosecurity plan template for producers to use for their on-farm biosecurity planning. The plan is available at the following link; <http://www.lbn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Biosecurity-Plan-Template-Johnes-2017-V1.4-1.pdf>

More information on JD in cattle and the J-BAS is available from:

- Animal Health Australia - <https://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/jd-cattle-tools/>
- Farm Biosecurity Project - www.farmbiosecurity.com.au

To bolster biosecurity on your farm, download the free FarmBiosecurity app or contact one of our Biosecurity & Extension Managers:

- Dr Pat Kluver (VIC): pkluver@lbn.org.au or 0499 077 213.
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What is Johne's Disease?

Johne's Disease (JD) is a serious wasting disease that affects various species of animals. In Australia, JD has been found in cattle, sheep, goats, deer and camelids.

JD infections are caused by the bacterium, *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis*, which live mainly in animal intestines, but can survive in the outside environment for several months.

JD bacteria affect animals by causing a thickening of the intestinal wall resulting in a reduction in the normal absorption of food. The infected animal is hungry and eats, but cannot absorb any nutrients. This results in wasting and finally death. Diarrhoea and bottle jaw are also common signs in cattle.

A number of strains of *M. paratuberculosis* have been identified and it is recognised that they are all capable of infecting a number of ruminant species.

Johne's disease in Australia

Australia is in the fortunate position of having relatively little Johne's disease compared to most developed agricultural countries. Large areas of Australia are Johne's disease-free, and a high proportion of Australia's livestock populations have no known infection.

<https://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/endemic-disease/johnes-disease/>