

JUNE 2017

Bovine Johnes Disease: What you need to know

By the 30th of June 2017 farms will need to have done the following to maintain a Dairy Score 8:

1. Register your intent to complete a Biosecurity Plan with your Veterinarian, and have this completed by June 30th. This is estimated to take 1-2 hours and cost around \$200.

And by 30th June 2018:

1. Maintain an audited Biosecurity Plan, and;
2. Complete a HEC (Herd Environment Culture) Test, this is a pooled faecal sample taken off the dairy yard, and should cost around \$150 - \$200. Your vet can collect this sample and arrange for it to be analysed. This will need to be repeated every 3 years.

Note: There is some discussion of the cut off date being extended, and Industry groups are pushing for this, however we haven't received clarification on this yet, and would encourage farmers to not delay calling their Vets to arrange testing and Biosecurity plans, should they wish to maintain their Dairy Score 8.

If you do not comply with the above, your Dairy Score will drop to 6 after 30th June 2017, and it is estimated to cost around \$3500+ to get your farm back up to Score 8, and involve comprehensive testing.

Bovine Johnes Disease: The Background

Bovine Johnes Disease (BJD), not to be confused with the sheep strain, Ovine Johnes Disease (OJD), is a chronic, incurable disease of adult dairy cattle.

Caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis*. Animals will present with diarrhoea, reduced milk production, weight loss and eventually death.

Animals will become infected as calves, generally through ingestion of contaminated faeces, but fail to display clinical signs until they are at least four years old. Diagnosis of the disease can be difficult, particularly in early stages of the disease.

BJD is a reportable disease under legislation in WA, which means anyone who suspects or has reason to suspect the disease in an animal, has a legal requirement to notify the Department of Agriculture and Food WA.

For more information on Johnes Disease visit the [Animal Health Australia Johnes Disease page](#).

So you've heard of J-BAS Score, but what does that mean?

Johnes Beef Assurance Score: J-BAS. Is the score assigned to Beef properties. The score provides a guide to the risk of Johnes Disease occurring on a beef property. A J-BAS is voluntary, and not currently regulated by the Government. The higher the J-BAS score, the lower the risk of that property having BJD.

All beef herds in Western Australia received the highest assurance score, J-BAS 8, when the J-BAS system was introduced in July 2016, as long as the property did not have a history of Ovine Johnes Disease on the property (Cattle can contract OJD).

In order to maintain the J-BAS score of 8, farmers will need to meet the following requirements:

1. You must have an On-Farm Biosecurity Plan in place by the 30th of June 2017. For J-BAS scores 7 & 8, these need to be verified by a Veterinarian.
2. Laboratory testing is required by the 30th of June 2018. No farm can maintain a J-BAS score of 7 or 8 without testing.

[Click here](#) to see the [J-BAS Score Flow](#) Chart DAFWA have designed for Beef Properties.

What about dairy properties?

Dairy farms are treated slightly different to beef properties and as such we have

a different scoring system. It basically mirrors the beef system, but is called the National Dairy BJD Assurance Score, or **Dairy Score** for short.

Currently all dairy farms within WA have been assigned a Dairy Score 8, the highest possible, due to the prevalence of BJD being low in WA. We now need to justify that our farms are in fact BJD 'free' in order to maintain our low prevalence status in WA.

Dairy farms will fall under the same requirements as beef farmers in order to maintain their Dairy Score 8. Whilst dairy farms won't drop to 0 immediately, this will happen over time if you do not implement a Veterinary approved Biosecurity Plan and test your herd.

So by the **30th of June 2017** farms will need to have done the following to maintain a Dairy Score 8:

1. Register your intent to complete a **Biosecurity Plan with your Veterinarian**, and have this completed by June 30th. This is estimated to take 1-2 hours and cost around \$200.

And by 30th June 2018:

1. Maintain an audited Biosecurity Plan, and;
2. Complete a **HEC (Herd Environment Culture) Test**, this is a pooled faecal sample taken off the dairy yard, and should cost around \$150 - \$200. Your vet can collect this sample and arrange for it to be analysed. This will need to be repeated every 3 years.

Note: There is some discussion of the cut off date being extended, and Industry groups are pushing for this, however we haven't received clarification on this yet, and would encourage farmers to not delay calling their Vets to arrange testing and Biosecurity plans, should they wish to maintain their Dairy Score 8.

If you do not comply with the above, your Dairy Score will drop to 6 after 30th June 2017, and it is estimated to cost around \$3500+ to get your farm back up to Score 8, and involve a **sample test (detailed below)**:

- Individual faecal samples taken from EVERY animal in small herds (under 210 animals) or;

- In herds with 220 animals or more; a minimum of 217 and maximum of 300 individual faecal samples will need to be taken.

The sample test protocol can be found [here](#) on the Animal Health Australia Website in the document "JD in Cattle Definitions and Guidelines".

Your Dairy Score will **continue to drop over time if you do nothing**, and eventually drop to 0. It is estimated it would take a farm about 5 years to regain a Score 8, and a considerable amount of time and money spent testing.

Future Implications

If you decide not to test your farm or implement a Biosecurity Plan, this could affect your ability to export and trade cattle internationally and locally. In the future some export markets and domestic trade may require a declaration of score 8 to purchase your cattle. Japan is a BJD adverse trade market to give you an example, and in the Eastern States agents are indicating their willingness to walk past pens of cattle with a J-BAS of 0.

Be sure to consider your production system into the future. Whilst you may not need a Dairy or J-BAS score now, if you do wish to sell into JD sensitive markets in the coming years, a Dairy or J-BAS score may be required.

What happens if your herd tests positive?

BJD is a reportable disease in Australia. If testing is positive for BJD the affected property will be placed under quarantine while the diagnosis is confirmed.

If BJD is confirmed the WA Industry Management Committee - Industry Funding Scheme (IMC - IFS) for Cattle will decide on a case-by-case basis if the disease is to be eradicated on the property or not. The decision will be informed by the results of a targeted surveillance program for JD in WA cattle.

For further information visit the DAFWA website: [What it means for WA Producers.](#)

On Farm Biosecurity Templates

Animal Health Australia has an [On-Farm Biosecurity Plan Template](#) available for use: [Click here.](#)

It incorporates the Johnes Disease Biosecurity Checklist, and has been developed for producers to use for this purpose.

The form is best opened in Google Chrome and can be filled out online or printed and filled in. It meets the minimum standards of the **National Farm Biosecurity Reference Manual - Grazing Livestock Production**.

Who to contact if you suspect BJD on your farm:

During office hours contact your nearest DAFWA field veterinary officer or your local veterinarian.

After hours contact the **exotic disease toll free hotline: 1800 675 888**

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