



Johne's disease Accreditation Scheme Health Plan Guidance Notes

October 2012

A new CHeCS technical document was issued in July 2012 with important changes to the Cattle Health Scheme, particularly to the Johne's scheme. There will be a **NEW graded system of accreditation** in place for the Johne's disease accreditation programme which will come into effect on the 1st January 2013. Herds may improve from level 4 to level 1, depending on the progress made in controlling the disease. The grading system can be used to classify the level of risk of Johne's disease associated with buying cattle from these herds.

Definition of the levels within the Johne's disease accreditation programme:

New status	Previous status	Description
Level 1	Accredited	Herds must have had three consecutive clear herd tests at annual intervals. This is equivalent to the previous accredited free status and is associated with the lowest risk in relation to buying breeding stock from participating herds
Level 2		
Level 2, year 2	Second qualifying test	This applies to herds that have had an initial (level 2, year 1) or two consecutive (level 2, year 2) clear tests. This is equivalent to the previous qualifying status
Level 2, year 1	First qualifying test	
Level 3	Screening and eradication	This applies to herds where reactors have been identified, but these constitute not more than 3% of cattle 2 years and over
Level 4	Screening and eradication	This applies to herds where reactors have been identified in more than 3% of cattle 2 years and over
Level 5		These herds may be carrying out a testing programme, but are not adhering to the mandatory requirements of the programme

It is an essential requirement for herds in Levels 1-4 to have a health plan in place covering the control of Johne's disease. The mandatory control elements of the Accreditation Programme are included in it. The health plan must be endorsed by both the Veterinary Surgeon and the herd owner and must be submitted to AFBI Cattle Health Scheme within two months of the initial herd test. Thereafter, it must be submitted annually with the herd test. To facilitate this, AFBI Cattle Health Scheme has issued Johne's health plan template that is available on the following website:

<https://www.afbini.gov.uk/publications/afbi-cattle-health-scheme-johnes-disease-health-plan-template>

Mandatory elements of the CHeCS Johne's Programme:

1. Annual testing must be carried out in accordance with the CHeCS technical document.
2. Added animals other than from sources with Level 1 status must be isolated and tested prior to entering participating herds. Both blood and dung testing is required, regardless of age.
3. All seropositive animals must be separated from young calves, seronegative animals and animals intended for breeding until follow up testing is carried out. If follow-up testing is not done, seropositive animals will be regarded as reactors.
4. Reactors (separated as above) must be removed from the herd as soon as is practical. Whilst they are retained, they must remain isolated and their dung must be kept away from other cattle. Any pasture used by reactors must not be grazed by other animals within the herd until at least 12 months has elapsed.
5. Any calf at foot of a reactor must not be retained or sold as a breeding animal. The last 2 calves born to reactor cows should not be retained or sold as breeding animal.
6. A health plan must be in place for the farm, covering the control of Johne's disease, which is updated annually and signed off by both the farmer and the herd's veterinary surgeon. The health plan must cover both the essential elements and guidelines associated with the programme.

Guidelines

1. Whilst Johne's disease can be transferred between adult animals, young calves are considered to be the most susceptible to infection. Herd specific instructions should be in place to reduce stock exposure to faecal contamination. This should be focussed on the calving period; the calving area and young calf accommodation should be kept as clean as possible.
2. Ideally there should be a gap of at least 12 months between spreading slurry/ manure on pasture and using it for grazing young calves.
3. Faecal contamination of feed and water sources should be reduced if possible.
4. It is advised that mains water is provided for grazing cattle where possible to reduce the potential for faecal contamination.
5. For the same reason, non-flowing natural water sources should be fenced off to prevent access.
6. Co-grazing with other ruminants is not recommended as they may act as a reservoir of infection.
7. The last 2 calves born to a reactor are considered to have a higher risk of being infected. It is advised that these are not retained for breeding or sold as breeding animals.

These mandatory and advisory elements should be discussed between the cattle health scheme member and their veterinary surgeon before the health plan is completed.