

FAQs about the Johne's Disease Initiative

Source: Mike Slomp, Industry and Member Services Manager

The Alberta dairy industry's Johne's disease initiative is well underway. A number of producers were quick off the mark and have completed an on-farm Johne's disease risk assessment with their local herd vet who also submitted environmental samples from the farm. To encourage more producers to call their herd veterinarian to have their assessment completed, these frequently asked questions are intended to dispel any myths or answer any questions regarding this initiative.

What's the objective of the Johne's disease initiative?

The AJDI objective is to reduce its prevalence of Johne's disease and minimize the economic impact of this production-limiting disease on the dairy industry.

I participated in the last provincial Johne's program - how is the AJDI different?

The last program was developed and administered by the provincial government-Agriculture and Rural Development. Unfortunately, this program ended due to the loss of funding. Alberta Milk producers and the University of Calgary, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine worked together to design this new, voluntary education and awareness initiative as a replacement for the previous program. The process and details about how to "grandfather" herds into the proposed Johne's status option are being worked out by the advisory committee.

Is the AJDI aligned with the new Canadian one?

Yes, the Alberta Johne's Disease Initiative is built on the foundation of the Canadian Johne's Disease Initiative. This will help to ensure consistency across the country.

DHI offers a Johne's testing option - how is this related to the AJDI?

Producers are encouraged to work with their herd vet to use DHI Johne's test results as part of their on-farm risk assessment and to prioritize their management practices to reduce the risk and spread of Johne's disease.

How do I find out what the on-farm risk assessment part of the initiative looks like?

A group of producers in the Edmonton area recently participated in an on-farm workshop to learn first-hand about the Johne's risk assessment. Ten producers along with the local herd vet walked through the host farm's calf pens, dry lot and milking herd barn to discuss the value of the risk assessment and the practical best management practices. The producers found this workshop to be a very useful way of understanding and discussing the Johne's disease risk assessment and the best management practices to reduce the risks. The participants found that in many cases little changes, often with low cost, can make a big difference.

Is there any funding available?

Funding is available to reimburse the herd vet \$200 for each producer's first on-farm Johne's risk assessment. The cost of the lab analysis of the environmental (manure) samples collected by the veterinarian is also covered.

How do I get my Johne's disease risk assessment?

Call your eligible herd vet and set the date. One of the most convenient times is likely at your next health herd visit.



Johne's Workshop

If you and your neighbours are interested in running a Johne's workshop in your area please call Emily McDonald at 780 577-3307. She would be happy to work with you to coordinate a workshop on a local farm. Alberta Milk will cover the cost of the veterinarian and lunch.

Financial solutions designed to meet your needs.

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