

100 Herds and Counting

Source: Emily McDonald, Industry Development Coordinator

Alberta Milk would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those dairy producers who have completed a risk assessment (RA) with their veterinarian as part of the Alberta Johne's Disease Initiative (AJDI). As of June 13, 2011, 114 Alberta dairy producers were enrolled in the AJDI. These participating producers were supported by 25 eligible veterinarians across the province; our thanks to them for helping implement this initiative.

The objective of the AJDI is to increase the awareness of Johne's Disease (JD) in the Alberta dairy industry and encourage the implementation of best management practices (BMPs) that will reduce the risk of JD entering the herd, or spreading within the herd if *Mycobacterium avium subspecies paratuberculosis*, or MAP, is already present in one or more animals. We are pleased to be able to partner with the University of Calgary, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (UCVM) in the delivery of this initiative.

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

With 106 participating dairy producers we are well on our way towards the goal of 50 per cent of Alberta dairy herds participating by December 31, 2011; but we still have a lot of risk assessments to complete to reach our goal! As part of the strategy to increase awareness of this initiative and to encourage producer participation, Alberta Milk regularly publishes information in newsletters and newspapers, distributes promotional material via direct mail and supports on-farm producer workshops.



On-farm producer workshops continue to be a very valuable and educational way to introduce the AJDI to producers and stimulate their interest in the program. If you would like to host one of these workshops with your veterinarian please do not hesitate to contact us to assist in organizing the details.

The following summary of test results to date is available courtesy of the UCVM. The environmental samples collected by the veterinarian take 6-8 weeks to culture and then are followed with a DNA test (polymerase chain reaction) to verify that the cultures are MAP.

Results from 48 farms:

- 34 farms negative for all six samples
- 14 farms had at least one positive sample

The risk assessments completed to date have identified some critical risk areas including:

- 50 farms had no restriction of visitor access to any animal
- 62 farms bought animals from several herds or at public auctions without any precautions in the last five years
- 62 farms had more than one cow in the calving pen more than 50 per cent of the time

If you would like more information on this initiative, to find out how to become eligible to perform Johne's Disease Risk Assessments for your clients or to host an on-farm workshop, please contact Emily McDonald, Alberta Milk's industry development coordinator at 1-877-361-1231 ext. 3307 or emcdonald@albertamilk.com.



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