



## Johne's Disease (Sheep & Goats)

The bacteria *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis* causes Johne's disease in both cattle and sheep and goats. The disease has been found across a range of extensive and intensive husbandry systems and is often under diagnosed. In many infected flocks the annual ewe mortality rate from Johne's disease is estimated to be as high as 5 to 10%. The importance of this disease in the livestock industry has been highlighted by the 'Action Johne's initiative' for Dairy Cows.

Johne's disease has a **long incubation period**, there is **no cure** and it is ultimately **fatal**.

### Clinical Signs

Disease symptoms are normally only seen in adults typically 3-4 years old

- Chronic weight loss despite animals eating normally
- Poor fleece in individual sheep
- Scouring is much less common in sheep and goats than in cattle
- Bottle jaw (swelling under the jaw) may be seen in the later stages

### Transmission

- Johne's infection is mainly caused by lambs/kids ingesting faeces through contaminated bedding, udders, dirty buckets etc.
- The disease can be acquired in the womb during advanced stages of the disease, although this route is much less common
- Infection ingested by adult sheep is unlikely to cause clinical disease.
- Johne's bacteria can be spread by wildlife e.g. deer and rabbits
- The bacteria can survive for many months on pasture

### Impact on the flock/herd

Animals with Johne's disease are likely to be culled earlier for animal welfare and productivity reasons. They are also more susceptible to other conditions. Animals which shed the bacteria do not always exhibit clinical signs (long incubation period) so a large cohort of young animals can be infected before you know it is in your flock/herd. Johne's Disease is known as an 'Iceberg disease' as by the time animals exhibit clinical signs there will be many others already infected.

- Increase in culling rate - cull suspect/confirmed cases as soon as possible
- Impact on replacements - DO NOT keep the offspring of infected animals
- The available vaccine will reduce losses but NOT eradicate Johne's from flock/ herd

# Protect your animals!

## Johne's Disease Screening Test Package

Screen a pooled sample of faeces from up to 6 sheep/goats – contact our office for more info

Useful test for targeting animals that are thin for no obvious reason, i.e. not broken mouthed or lame. Investigate ewes on good grass that fail to gain weight after weaning.

## Johne's Disease Accreditation Scheme

Add value and protect your flock/herd by joining our nationally recognised health scheme below!

### Benefits of Joining

Our specialist vets with extensive knowledge of this disease are available to discuss test results and action plans for your animals with you vet.

- SRUC Consulting Veterinary Services work with you and your vet to control and manage the disease in your flock/herd and reduce the risk of infection
- As a member you benefit from preferential testing rates to keep costs down.
- Advertise your stock's risk level for Johne's Disease at auction or for private sales and be listed on our online database

### How the Accreditation Scheme Works

- Follow the scheme rules and conditions for testing, stock management and biosecurity
- Flock/herd tested annually via milk/blood (all animals over 12 months old)
- Faeces testing can also be used for vaccinated animals.
- Certificates provided to prove your flock or herd's risk level status

### For more info please contact:

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