



Herd Health

a column by **Ken Olson**

Johne's: Where's the information?

"A national survey of dairy producers is currently underway to learn more about why individuals do – or do not – participate in the Voluntary Bovine Johne's Disease Control Program, and identify what other information is needed to make the program more effective. If you are invited to participate, please respond. Working together we will make the current program even better."

FYI

■ **Ken Olson, Ph.D., PAS**, is national Johne's disease education coordinator. Contact him via phone: 630-237-4961 or e-mail: keolson@prodigy.net.

■ Visit the National Johne's Education Initiative web site, www.johnesdisease.org.

Johne's disease has been known for more than a century. The bacteria that causes the disease was identified years ago. The disease is found in dairy and beef cattle, sheep, goats, deer – in fact in all ruminant animals. It is present in all regions of the country and in virtually every country in the world. It is found in operations with all types of management systems. We know that it is a devastating disease for animals and a costly disease for producers, yet due to the organism's characteristics, controlling the disease and reducing its prevalence remains a major challenge. Where can you go for information about the disease, and what is being done to address it?

State-national coordination

A variety of activities are in place to help producers deal with specific needs related to Johne's. Challenges have been to know where to go for information from these projects; and to develop greater coordination between the efforts.

On-farm programs originated at the state level, but more consistency was needed between state programs. As a result, standards for the Voluntary Bovine Johne's Disease Control Program (VBJDCP) were published by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in 2002. The program now operates under the umbrella of the national program, but still functions largely at the state level. It includes education, management and testing components. Each state has a designated Johne's coordinator and an advisory committee. State and nationally developed information is used by veterinarians and producers who participate in the program.

The National Johne's Work Group (NJWG), a subcommittee of the U.S. Animal Health Association's Johne's Disease Committee, plays a lead role in updating the program and providing educational information. Other information is developed by individual states and universities.

New consortium

The Johne's Disease Integrated Program (JDIP) is a relatively new consortium, focused on research to improve and create tools producers can use to deal more effectively with the dis-

ease. Faster, more accurate tests; development of innovative control measures; and assessment of the effectiveness of currently recommended management practices are all included in this effort. While research takes time, the consortium's broad base is intended to shorten the time from discovery research to application.

State-national coordination

The Johne's Education Initiative (JEI), established through a cooperative agreement between APHIS and the National Institute for Animal Agriculture, provides a focal point for science-based Johne's information, making the most efficient use of available resources.



A primary tool is the JEI web site, www.johnesdisease.org. The site provides basic information about Johne's disease, program resources and links to a wide range of information. The "State Programs" section

provides easy access to state specific information. It includes a U.S. map, where a click on a state provides links to Johne's contacts within the state and other state specific information.

The "Program Herds" section is another area of special interest for producers. To maintain their current program status level, any animal brought into a program herd must come from a herd of equal or higher status. The site may serve as a place where producers can source breeding stock or herd replacements in other states.

The site also serves as the home for information from the NJWG. PowerPoint presentations and other information from recent meetings are available on the "NJWG" section. This expands information distribution, allowing state Johne's disease coordinators and other educators easy access for use at other local and regional meetings.

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