



## Voluntary Johne's disease program receives \$300,000 boost from provincial government

Ontario's voluntary Johne's disease control program, an industry-led initiative to provide dairy producers with management solutions to the production-limiting infection, has received a \$300,000 boost from the provincial government.

The Johne's Education and Management Assistance Program is focused on preventing the spread of Johne's, a common bacterial infection in the intestinal tract of cattle. The program complements safeguards for animal health provided under the new Ontario Animal Health Act.

"Ontario's dairy industry has provided strong leadership in promoting practices that contribute to animal and human health, and food quality," said Leona Dombrowsky, Ontario agriculture minister at the time the grant was announced. "These have always been important priorities for our government, and I am pleased to support efforts that will enhance the excellence of our province's dairy industry."

Johne's costs the dairy industry through lower milk production and premature culling. This program is also about maintaining consumer confidence in high-quality dairy products from healthy, productive dairy cows, says Dr. Ann Godkin, who chaired the industry working group that developed the program.

The program focuses on prevention of new infections as the most effective long-term strategy, based on results from international research and proven field practices. Launched in January, the program has four main components:

- education and extension for producers and veterinarians;
- a mandatory annual Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) by the producer and herd vet—a review of critical areas where Johne's is transmitted with a focus on newborn calves;
- a voluntary individual cow testing program to estimate herd infection

prevalence and identify cows shedding high numbers of the Johne's bacteria;

- voluntary removal of high-titer cows to reduce Johne's disease transmission risk.

The producer incentive for partici-

pating in the voluntary elements of the program is the reimbursement for testing costs, up to \$8 per animal for herds.

For more information about the program, contact co-ordinator, Nicole Perkins by e-mail at [johnes@uoguelph.ca](mailto:johnes@uoguelph.ca) or call (226) 979-1664. Information and forms are posted on the program website at [www.johnes.ca](http://www.johnes.ca).

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