



Johne's program aids herds with high-titre cows

By Nicole Perkins

The Ontario Johne's disease program is now providing financial assistance to producers who have high-titre (HT) cows detected by the testing program. With a greater than 95 per cent probability of actively shedding bacteria that cause Johne's disease, these cows should be removed from herds.

So far, only five herds out of 92 tested have had at least one HT cow identified. Eight cows—or 0.12 per cent of all cows tested—have been HTs.

While these animals remain rare in the Ontario dairy cow population, removing them immediately reduces Johne's spread within a herd. HT cows shed *Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis* (MAP), the bacteria that cause Johne's, in their manure. They actively contaminate the environment, bedding, feed, water, alleyways and pens.

If moved to another herd, they will introduce Johne's disease to that farm as well. No one wants to buy these cows for dairy or beef. We strongly encourage pro-

ducers to remove these problematic cows through rendering, compost or burial.

When HT cows are found on program herd tests, herd owners receive a letter from the program co-ordinator advising them of their options. They can choose to keep these cows, but become ineligible for the \$8 per cow test reimbursement.

The program also provides one-time \$250 assistance per HT cow. These funds help producers improve

management, as recommended by their vets, to reduce the risk of spreading MAP.

This financial assistance will be included in the testing reimbursement after a producer fulfils all program requirements. They include a completed Animal Health Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) with the herd vet and proof of HT cow disposal received by the program co-ordinator.

The requirement for HT cow removal remains an important feature of the program. We recommend removing only HT cows, not all positive cows. Removal remains voluntary since this is management assistance, not a regulatory program. However, we strongly encourage producers to discuss these cows with their own veterinarians.

Herd testing opportunities are scheduled by county. Since the Ontario Johne's program began in January, 92 herds of the 157 eligible in three counties tested their herds by March 1. Participation in testing is around 60 per cent of all herds and 85 per cent of herds on DHI.

So far, 12 per cent of herds have had at least one positive test result. Of the 6,264 milk samples tested for Johne's, 40, or 0.6 per cent of cows tested, have had positive results. Test-positive cows, in most cases, can be kept in a herd and managed as advised by the herd vet.

An additional 16 vets completed training as of March 1. Ontario now has 160 Ontario vets trained and ready to work with Ontario dairy producers.

Vital Statistics

Ontario Johne's disease program status as of March 1, 2010

- Total milk samples tested: **6,264**
- Total herds tested: **92** out of **157** eligible
- Number of herds with at least one positive test result: **40**
- Number of herds with at least one high-titre test result: **5**
- Number of cows with high-titre test result: **8**
- Number of new vets trained since Jan. 1: **16**
- Total number of trained vets: **160**
- Number of completed RAMPs: **39**

NOTICE: To keep Ontario dairy producers and other industry sectors informed, Dairy Farmers of Ontario publishes changes to its regulations.

Complete regulations are available on DFO's website at www.milk.org.

DFO Regulation 05/10 replaces DFO Regulation 04/10 and was made to adjust the price of Special Milk Classes as a result of a CDC announcement, effective March 1, 2010 as follows:

Class	Butterfat (\$/kg)		Protein (\$/kg)		Other Solids (\$/kg)	
	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old
5(a)	3.3559	3.3120	5.9592	6.0654	0.4789	0.4616
5(b)	3.3559	3.3120	2.1069	2.3332	2.1069	2.3332
5(c)	3.7281	3.7886	2.9328	2.0138	2.9328	2.0138
Bill Emmott	Chair		John Karn	Secretary		

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Nicole Perkins is co-ordinator of the Ontario Johne's Program (e-mail: johnes@uoguelph.ca, phone: 226-979-1664). Information and forms are posted on the Johne's program website at www.johnes.ca.