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JOHNE'S DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Replacement heifer management

OBJECTIVE:

To remove susceptible heifers from sources of MAP.

BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ Use dedicated grazing for calves and replacement heifers
- ☐ Transfer calves ASAP to rearing unit for young stock only
- ☐ Never spray effluent on calf paddocks; beware of wind drift
- ☐ Provide clean bore-hole water or other uncontaminated source

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- ☐ Use separate paddocks on home farm from milking platform
- ☐ Avoid paddocks for 3 months after grazing by adult stock
- ☐ Keep heifers separate from other species and adults at runoff/grazier
- ☐ Fence off open water and riparian strips

HIGH-RISK BEHAVIOURS

- ☐ Set-stocking calves on the dairy platform or shared grazing with adults
- ☐ Contact with adults e.g. cull cows, carry-overs or wintering on run-off
- ☐ Pasture recently irrigated with effluent or access to effluent pond/overflow
- ☐ Access to open water sources with possible faecal contamination

NOTES

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JOHNE'S DISEASE RISK INFORMATION

Replacement heifer management

JD control requires dairy heifers to be separated from infected adults – keep off the dairy platform. Never allow replacement heifers to share grazing with adults or follow adult stock rotation.

Other animal species also harbour MAP; the bacteria survive in the environment on pasture and in water.

Prevent contact with adults and do not share pasture

Calves should be moved off the dairy platform to a dedicated rearing facility as soon as possible. If calves remain on the home farm (or a run-off used for other stock e.g. over wintering and carry-over cows) make sure that:

- Heifers are grazed on dedicated young stock pasture. Or,
- Spell pastures after cows for at least one month, preferably 3+ months
- Provide clean water and fence off open water-ways.

Other animal species also carry MAP and may spread disease. Deer are highly susceptible to infection and MAP may pass between species. Cattle are susceptible to sheep strains of MAP.

Some Do's and Don'ts

- Never allow adult cows and young stock together in the same paddock. Set stocking calves across the dairy farm may expose calves to massive MAP loads repeatedly. Over time the infection level will rise with clinical JD occurring in younger cows. This infects the next generation
- Keep carry-over cows (and wintering stock or other species) separate from heifers at the run-off.
- Do make hay before grazing heifers in adult cow pastures to help reduce the potential MAP loading
- Do persevere. To bring JD under control requires breaking the cow-calf infection cycle for several years
- Test-and-cull can be effective in reducing risks but risk management is the crux to reducing JD.
- Mark any high-risk or test-positive stock clearly – it is too easy to lose track of them on a day-to-day basis.

MAP bacteria can survive for months in the environment

Direct contact with faeces or effluent presents the highest risk of infection to calves and heifers but MAP can persist:

- **On pasture**, especially in soil and damp or shaded areas. (Sun and drying will inactivate bacteria). Spelling pastures for three months or more ensures that MAP exposure is minimised.
- **In water**, including open water courses and run-off. (MAP may concentrate in soil and pastures at the bottom of hill paddocks)
- **In effluent ponds or tanks** for many months, so keep young stock out of sprayed paddockas and be aware of aerosol spread.

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