

JOHNE'S DISEASE BULLETIN

The Irish Johne's Control Programme – the first six months

During the first six months of operation, 638 herdowners have registered as part of Phase One of the Irish Johne's Control Programme (IJCP) with a further 370 herdowners expressing interest in registering for the IJCP when Phase Two commences later this year. This is a significant milestone for Phase One of the Programme for which a target of 500 herdowners had been set.

The Irish Johne's Control Programme focusses on:

- Individual herd risk assessments undertaken by Approved veterinary Practitioners (AVP), and the development of customised Management Plans known as VRAMPs.
- Regular whole herd screening tests using individual ELISA tests, contributing to the development of a herd assurance score for JD. There will be two different pathways for herds to build assurance; one for herds continuing to test negative and another for herds identified as infected.
- Communication and awareness activities.

Some interesting findings have emerged over the past six months about the importance and value of each of these activities.

Data collected during the pilot programme (2014-2016) and from the first six months of the IJCP have shown that overall there is a consistent reduction in average annual herd scores for all sections of the VRAMP, indicating an improvement in herd

risk management in each of these areas (Figure 1). Improvements have been most pronounced in the sections relating to the management of pre-weaned heifers and the calving area. This is good news for Johne's disease control in Ireland, since lower scores reflect lower risk as a consequence of better management. The careful management of pre-calving and calving cows and young calves is crucial, with effective hygiene practices at these times reducing the risk of Johne's disease spread within a herd.

86 herds have already completed a whole herd test in the period November 2017 – January 2018, and a further 271 herdowners have already commenced whole herd testing using either milk or blood samples.

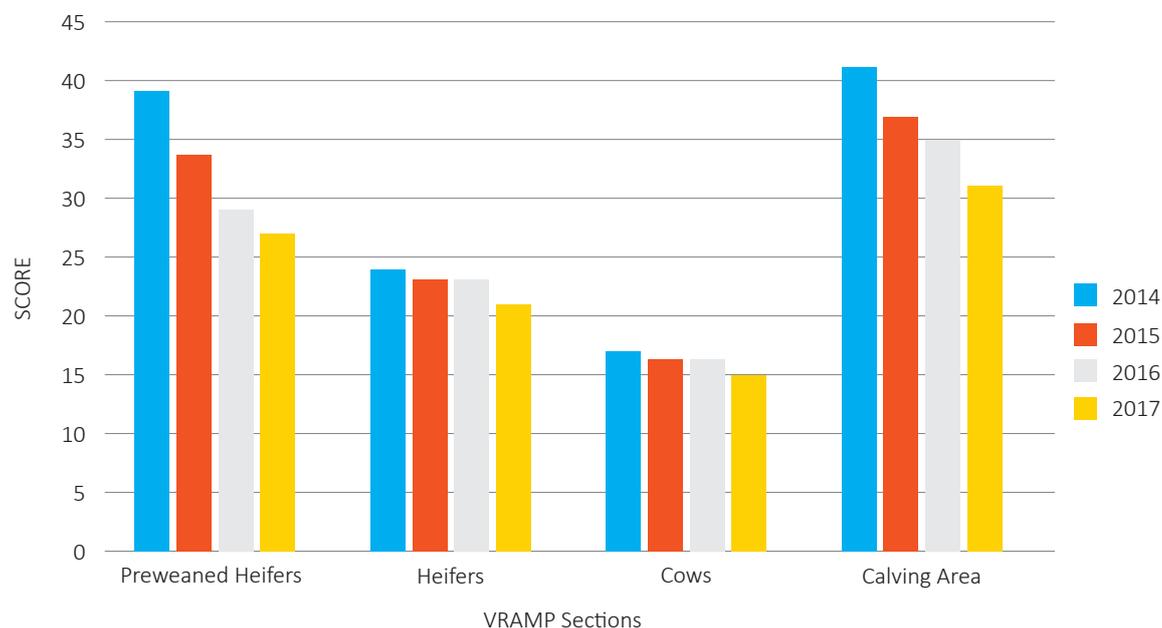


Figure 1. Annual herd scores for all sections of the VRAMP during the period 2014- 2017/18.

86 herds have already completed a whole herd test in the period November 2017 – January 2018, and a further 271 herdowners have already commenced whole herd testing using either milk or blood samples. Herdowners who are testing using milk samples, are reminded that two tests, at least 90 days apart are required, avoiding the first seven days of lactation and peak milk production, with a single blood sample from those animals where milk samples are not available or not possible. All herdowners must have every animal tested that is over the age of 2 years on the date of the first sampling, including bulls, and should discuss the timing of testing with their Approved Veterinary Practitioner.

From information provided by herdowners during registration, 35% of herdowners intend to use milk as the principal sample type, 60% indicated a preference for blood sampling, and 5% indicated they would use both types of sample. Herdowners have taken advantage of financial supports for

ancillary testing (PCR test) with 105 ancillary tests undertaken in 2017/18.

Since November 2017, milk processors and Approved Veterinary Practitioners have worked together to delivered over 40 Farmer Awareness Seminars to herdowners interested in preventing the entry and spread of Johne's disease within dairy herds. Additional awareness activities are planned for 2018 and all herdowners are encouraged to contact their local co-operative for details of future seminars.

A positive start has been made to the Irish Johne's Control Programme with many herdowners showing their long-term commitment to preventing the spread of this important production disease within the Irish dairy industry. If you are planning to take the first steps towards Johne's' control this year, speak with your Veterinary Practitioner, or see the AHI Website and register your interest in participating using the form available online [click here](#).