

Completing 2022 programme activities

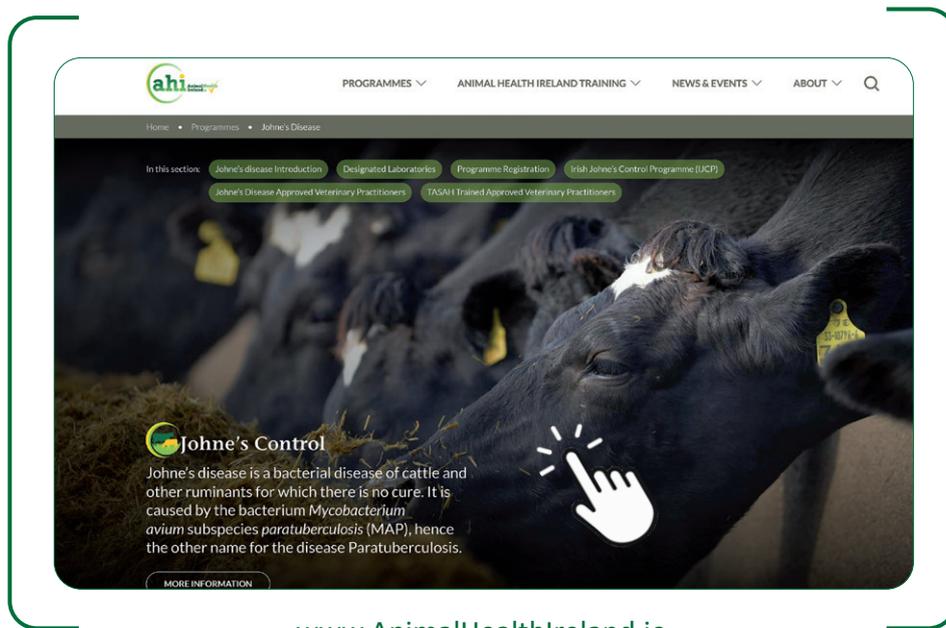
Liam Doyle, Johne's disease Programme Manager

As 2022 draws to a close herds registered in the Irish Johne's Control Programme (IJCP) are taking the required actions to complete their Whole Herd Test (WHT) and Veterinary Risk Assessment and Management Plan (VRAMP). At the start of December 2022 of the 2,071 herds registered in the IJCP 883 had their WHT completed, 440 had started their WHT but not completed it and 748 herds had yet to start their WHT. It is important that all herdowners who are members of the IJCP access their ICBF Johne's screen (<https://johnes.icbf.com>) which will highlight to them any outstanding programme actions. It is essential that all members complete their WHT and VRAMP however the following points are important to consider:

- Any WHT started in 2022 will count towards the 2022 programme. If a herd test due in 2022 is not started until 2023 it will count towards the 2023 programme year.
- As for the past three years the deadline for completing a WHT for 2022 has been extended until the end of January 2023. This means that any WHT started but not completed in 2022 has until the end of January 2023 to carry this out.
- One of the reasons why some WHTs are not completed is that when using milk as the main sampling method, not all eligible animals are sampled, requiring a follow-up 'sweeper' blood sample of these animals. In addition, cull cows, bulls and beef animals present on the farm may be overlooked or excluded from sampling. One common reason given as to why these animals are not tested is that they were located on an out farm away from the main herd. Missing the testing of these animals has an impact on the overall accuracy of the WHT. If these animals are older and fall into the category of 'cull' due to sickness, infertility or lameness they are more likely to be infected, which gives the WHT a better chance of providing an accurate indication about the herd. **Importantly, completion of the WHT is also a milk processor requirement for eligible herds to receive financial supports toward the WHT.**
- If it happens that you do have animals on the farm that were missed when the milking herd was tested, contact your veterinary practitioner to arrange for them to be tested as required. This type of test known as a 'sweeper' test can be carried out up to 31st of January 2023 so long as the WHT was started in 2022.
- If some animals which were eligible for the annual WHT are no longer on the farm and thus cannot be tested as part of a 'sweeper' test, usually as a result of an animal dying or unavoidable culling, then an 'Application for Exemption' form must be completed by the herdowner. Each of these individual applications will be judged on their own merit. The form is available on the AHI website [click here](#).
- If the animals are non-breeding beef animals held at a biosecure separate holding to the dairy herd these can be exempted from the WHT. In order to use this exemption please have your vet (AVP) complete the 'Notification for Exemption' form [click here](#).

It is also important within the programme to complete any required ancillary faecal testing. If a herd in the IJCP discloses ELISA positive or inconclusive animal(s) and has not had a previous positive faecal culture or PCR test then faecal testing of these animal(s) is necessary to resolve the status of these animals, and the herd, within the programme. If you are unsure as to whether your animals require a faecal PCR test post the WHT this information is available on your ICBF herd dashboard or if still unsure contact your vet for advice on the matter. Remember also that if Johne's infection has not been previously confirmed by a faecal PCR test, then this testing is fully funded within the programme.

Another important development for the Irish Johne's Control Programme is the new standard where ICBF now require the sample date as part of any IJCP diagnostic sample upload. This is an important development for farmers and vets as it allows IJCP sampling to integrate better alongside TB testing. Previously dates recorded for Johne's sampling were very often the date on which the laboratory received a sample which resulted in these samples having a date registered after the carrying out of a TB test. This relatively common scenario which up to now has led to confusion and unnecessary administration is hopefully now resolved, leading to a much more streamlined process.



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