

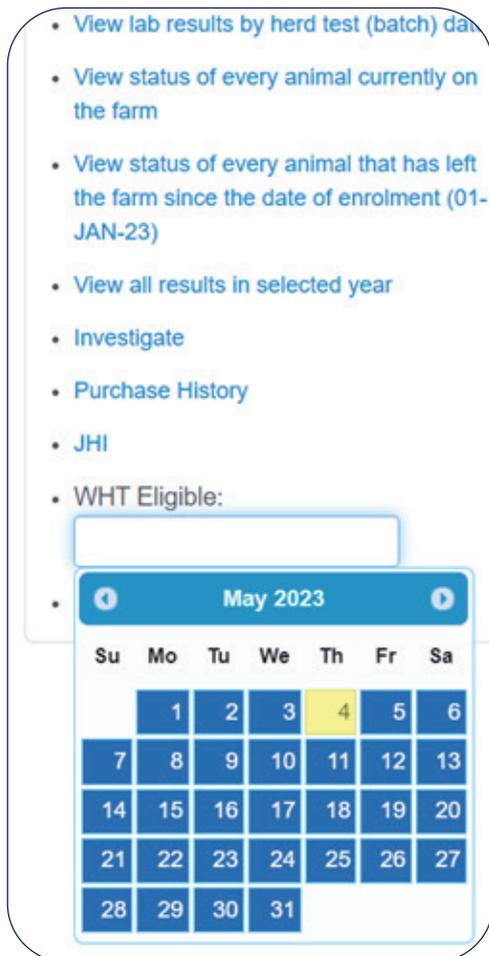
# Get your Johne's herd test organised!

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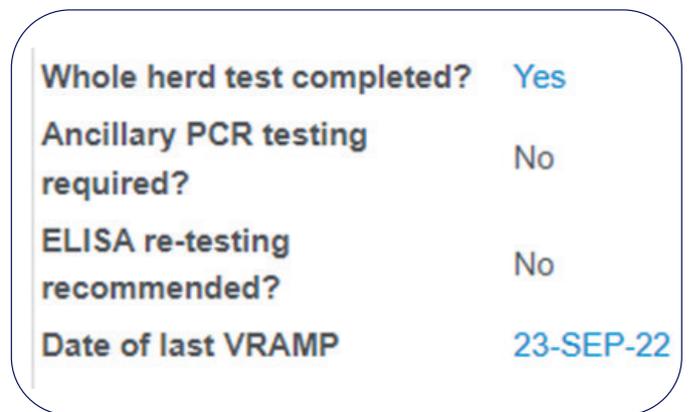
It is important to organise and carry out your Johne's herd test as early in the programme year as possible, thus giving flexibility to negotiate your way through the many complex issues any farm will face before year end. The herd test is one of the vital components of the Johne's programme as it gives an indication about how likely it is that a herd is infected and it also returns important animal-level information to the farmer and their vet. These animal-level results allow risk assessments be made about the management of test positive animals, their progeny, dams and even cohort animals. Here are a number of things to consider:

- It must be at least six months (180 days) since the start of the previous round on Johne's testing on the farm.
- If milk recording is used on the farm this is a labour and cost saving method to carry out the bulk of your annual Johne's testing. It should be organised through your milk recording organisation (MRO). It is also recommended to test samples collected during milk recording during mid lactation (May to September).
- When using milk samples for Johne's testing, avoid taking these within seven days of calving and also with milk samples avoid the later stages of lactation (last couple of months). In both these situations there tends to be increased levels of what are considered to be false positive results. Any increase in level of false positive results can confuse interpretation of the overall herd results meaning that it may be more difficult to pick out the higher risk animals.
- All cattle in the herd over the age of two years on the date the whole herd test is commenced are eligible for testing and should be sampled on the same day if possible.. Very often, and especially if using milk recording as the sampling method, not all animals will be tested during the initial Johne's herd test. This means that some animals listed for testing such as bulls or cull cows not going through the parlour will be present on the farm but not sampled. For this reason it is useful to plan a "sweeper test" using blood sampling within 30 days of the herd milk test. It is an idea to coordinate this sweeper test with the first day of a TB test to minimise the work of gathering cattle on another occasion.
- Always keep an eye to your TB test as Johne's testing cannot be carried out within 90 days after cattle are injected, on the first day of a TB test. If herds are in a situation where they are undergoing frequent TB testing then they should contact their vet; as with special permissions in these circumstances the Johne's herd test may be carried out after 60 days.

- A useful feature of the ICBF Johne's web page ([click here](#)) is the ability to produce and download a list of all eligible animals required for a Johne's test at a particular date (Figure 1). Also on the web page (Figure 2) next to 'Whole Herd Test Completed?' if Yes is present it means your herd is fully compliant in terms of its testing requirements for that year.



**Figure 1.** View of the ICBF Johne's home page dashboard and the Whole Herd Test Eligible feature which will generate a list of cattle from your herd two years or older on that date.



**Figure 2.** View of the ICBF Johne's home page dashboard and the herd information section which shows the herdowner if their herd test is fully completed.

On the ICBF Johne's homepage other information can also be found related to your herd test, such as animals required to be tested as part of the herd test but not presented at the time (animals which will need to be part of a sweeper test) and animals which require ancillary faecal testing.

Herd testing is an important part of the Johne's control programme but must be used in conjunction with other essential measures for reducing spread of Johne's disease and will also protect against other calf diseases. These include early removal of high-risk animals, attention to hygiene at calving and in calf pens, early separation of calves after calving, hygienically feeding colostrum and milk from low-risk cows, and protecting replacement calves and heifers in sheds and on pasture from exposure to dung and slurry from adult cattle.

For more information about controlling Johne's disease, speak to your veterinary practitioner or refer to the IJCP webpages [click here](#).