

# Completion of Ancillary PCR testing as part of IJCP requirements

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The Irish Johne's Control programme (IJCP) places certain requirements on its members as part of their involvement. These requirements are:

- Nomination of an Approved Veterinary Practitioner (AVP), these being private veterinary practitioners who have undertaken Johne's Disease (JD) training delivered by AHI.
- Regular completion of a Veterinary Risk Assessment and Management Plan (VRAMP) by a nominated AVP.
- An annual Whole Herd Test (WHT) of eligible animals (those aged 2 years and above) in years one to four of the programme using either a milk or blood sample from each animal.
- Ancillary testing of faecal samples (by PCR) of all animals following ELISA test-positive or inconclusive results in herds where infection has not already been confirmed (i.e., absence of previous faecal-positive result).
- Veterinary investigation, funded through the Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health (TASAH) under the Rural Development Programme, following positive ancillary test results.
- Members undertake not to move any animal that is inconclusive, positive or suspect based on testing for JD, except directly to a knackery, licensed slaughter premises, feedlot or herd from which animals are exclusively sent to slaughter.

Testing for Johne's disease as part of the Irish Johne's Control Programme is a combination of the ELISA test (Whole Herd Test on blood or milk) and the ancillary PCR faecal test. Whenever an animal discloses a positive or inconclusive ELISA result and the herd has not previously had a faecal PCR positive test, then these animals must be faecal PCR-tested. These samples should be submitted for testing within 45 days of the date of their positive or inconclusive ELISA result. There are, however, two exceptional circumstances where an animal with a positive or inconclusive ELISA result will not require an ancillary PCR test. These are when the ELISA test samples were collected and submitted to the laboratory within 7 days after calving (for an ELISA test on a milk sample only) or within 90 days after a TB skin test (on blood or milk). In each of these scenarios, the follow-up test should be an ELISA re-test on a blood or milk sample, after the expiry of the 7-day or 90-day period, respectively. In these scenarios, neither the ELISA re-test nor an ancillary PCR test will be funded by the programme. Wherever possible you should therefore schedule ELISA testing to avoid these periods.

With Johne's disease positive or inconclusive ELISA result animals in herds which have not previously disclosed an ancillary PCR positive (and not covered by the two exceptional circumstances described above), ancillary testing is funded. However, it is vital to check the eligibility status for funding of individual animal faecal PCR tests with your vet (AVP) or on the Johne's disease dashboard on ICBF, before submitting samples to the laboratory.

The reason that ancillary PCR testing is not required or funded in herds which have previously had a positive result to a PCR test is that these herds are already confirmed to be infected and animals within these herds disclosing a positive or inconclusive ELISA result are also considered to be infected without the need for PCR testing.

All members of the IJCP are now notified by text message whenever Johne's results are uploaded to ICBF and a link is provided to view the results. The message will also highlight the fact that positive or inconclusive ELISA results were disclosed at the test and direct you to contact your AVP and provide a link to your herd's Johne's dashboard on ICBF where further information is available. Examples of the type of the message a herdowner will receive after completing their herd test and dependent on test results are shown below in Table 1.

AHI: IJCP 2023 Johnes ELISA results upload: Not all negative. WHT Not yet complete. VRAMP Not complete. Contact your vet. More see <a href="https://johnes.icbf.com">https://johnes.icbf.com</a>
AHI: IJCP 2023 Johnes faecal PCR results upload: All negative. WHT Not yet complete. VRAMP Complete. Contact your vet. More see <a href="https://johnes.icbf.com">https://johnes.icbf.com</a>
AHI: IJCP 2023 Johnes ELISA results upload: All negative. WHT Complete. VRAMP Not Required. Contact your vet. More see <a href="https://johnes.icbf.com">https://johnes.icbf.com</a>
AHI: IJCP 2023 Johnes ELISA results upload: All negative. WHT Not yet complete. Not Required. Contact your vet. More see <a href="https://johnes.icbf.com">https://johnes.icbf.com</a>
AHI: IJCP 2023 Johnes ELISA results upload: Not all negative. WHT Complete. VRAMP Not complete. Contact your vet. More see <a href="https://johnes.icbf.com">https://johnes.icbf.com</a>

**Table 1.** Examples of messages which a herdowner member of the IJCP will receive after their ELISA herd test results are uploaded to ICBF.

Remember, if you currently have any animals in your herd which require ancillary PCR testing and these have not been completed, please contact your vet to arrange the sampling. If you require further information about the Irish Johne's Control Programme, please refer to the Animal Health Ireland website for further details [click here](#).