

USE YOUR LAST VRAMP TO HELP WITH CALVING TIME PREPARATIONS

Liam Doyle, Johne's disease Programme Manager

Calves are the most susceptible animals on your farm to Johne's Disease (JD) infection, and the major infection source for them is the dung from infected cows. This means that calving time is when you can have most impact on protecting the health and preventing the spread of JD into the next generation of cattle on your farm. If you are a member of the Irish Johnes Control Programme (IJCP) then it's a good time to look back at your last completed VRAMP (veterinary risk assessment and management plan). The VRAMP contains tailored veterinary advice for your farm, focused on priority areas, with the aim to reduce within-farm disease transmission. The VRAMP should be looked upon as the guidance you must put in place on your farm to try and break the cycle of JD infection. To access your last VRAMP go to your JD home page on ICBF (Figure 1) and click on the date value opposite "Date of last VRAMP" to take you to the document. [Accessing the AHI dashboards](#).

Current Johnes Herd Status

Select Year: 2025 ▾

Herd Details

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Herd Number: | C0000001 |
| Owner Name: | A. Farmer |
| Address: | Address |
| Mobile: | A. 353 8X 1234567 |
| Date of most recent enrolment in the IJCP | 02-SEP-24 |
| Date of initial enrolment in the IJCP | 01-JAN-24 |
| Date of last positive faecal culture or PCR | |
| Whole herd test completed? | Not Yet Started |
| Ancillary PCR testing required? | No |
| ELISA re-testing recommended? | No |
| Date of last VRAMP | 26-SEP-24 |
| VRAMP for 2025 | Not Required |

To see your last VRAMP go to your JD Homepage and opposite 'Date of last VRAMP' click on the 'Date' value

Remember also that it is not just IJCP herds which should be putting in place measures to combat JD. All farms have some chance of having JD infection, although a continuous year on year history of negative herd tests builds confidence of its absence. As an added benefit the hygiene measures put in place to combat JD transmission to calves will also reduce transmission of other diseases, which in turn improves both calf and cow health enhancing overall productivity and welfare levels.

The following are some suggestions for things that all herds can do to protect your calves and try to break the transmission cycle which infects them with JD. Look at the suggestions and determine which are the most practical for you and try to implement as many of them as possible over time, building them into your normal working routine:

1. Identify high-risk cows using test results, in collaboration with your veterinary practitioner. As effectively as possible given your farm circumstances separate high-risk cows from the main herd for calving, so that calves from low-risk cows are not exposed to dung from high-risk cows.
2. Clean cows of dung before they enter calving pens.
3. Keep calving pens clean and dry. Remove dung and replace soiled bedding regularly.
4. Do not use calf pens to hold sick adult cattle.
5. Separate calves as soon after birth as possible, into a clean nesting area.
6. Prevent manure from the calving pen and other adult facilities from getting into the calf pens; clean or use separate boots, wash hands, change soiled clothes when you enter the calf pens, or have someone dedicated to looking after the calves.
7. Select replacement calves from low-risk cows; do not keep replacement heifer calves from high-risk cows (particularly their most recent calves).
8. Collect and prepare milk and colostrum hygienically, avoiding faecal contamination.
9. Ensure that calves receive colostrum – remember the Colostrum 1, 2, 3 rule: The 1st MILK, and only the first milk the cow produces, should be used to feed to the newborn calf for its first feed; Feed calves within 2 HOURS of birth as antibody absorption is highest at this time; Feed 3 LITRES to ensure the calf receives enough antibodies.
10. Provide colostrum and milk, especially to calves intended to be retained as replacements or sold for breeding, from low-risk sources (individual test-negative, low-risk cows, or their own dam); preferably not from pooled colostrum or milk (even pooled from low-risk cows), and definitely not from high-risk cows.
11. If possible, house calves to be retained as replacements separate from calves from high-risk cows.

For further information on the AHI website about how to help control JD in your herd check out the following link which will take you to the relevant fact sheets and documents related to JD.
[Click here for AHI Johnes Resource Documents](#)