

Information for veterinarians submitting to the Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory

Advice on sampling and testing for Johne's disease in cattle

The current [national approach to Johne's disease \(JD\)](#) management in cattle, the JD Framework, focuses on managing this endemic disease. The [beef](#) and [dairy](#) cattle industries have each developed strategies for managing JD biosecurity risks. Further information on these tools can be found on their websites at <https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au> and <https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au>. These voluntary tools help to identify herds and flocks with a low risk of infection.

Western Australia has updated their import requirements for cattle including the removal of all mandatory JD faecal testing requirements. The Johne's Beef Assurance Score (J-BAS) and the JD Dairy Assurance Score are no longer part of WA's conditions for cattle being imported to WA, although the J-BAS may be used to meet some of the conditions. More details about the new Johne's disease import conditions and the health certification required for the movement of livestock into WA can be found at: <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/livestock-biosecurity/forms-importing-livestock-western-australia>

Johne's disease is category 1 restricted matter. Under Queensland legislation, if you become aware of the presence of this disease in any species of animal, you must report it to **Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23**.

For producers to investigate suspected disease, or to meet and maintain eligibility for a particular J-BAS or Dairy Score, [laboratory testing](#) may be required. The Queensland Government Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory (BSL) at Coopers Plains currently offers the following tests:

HT-J faecal PCR

- Screening test only
- HT-J PCR is recommended over the ELISA due to increased risk of false-positive results with the ELISA
- Any animals or groups of animals that react positively should be investigated through faecal culture or by slaughter and tissue culture/histopathology.
- Conducted on individual or pooled (up to 5 samples per pool) faeces:
 - a minimum of 30 g (70 mL screw-top container $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ full) of faeces is collected per rectum from individual animals and labelled sequentially from 1
 - samples should arrive at the laboratory within 48 hours of collection and must be kept chilled during this time
 - do not pool on-farm; pooling (where appropriate) will be done at the laboratory
- Please contact the laboratory for pricing
- Turnaround time of 2-4 weeks
- Individual animal identification and sampling records should be kept so that reactors can be identified for further testing if required

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ELISA

- HT-J PCR is recommended over the ELISA due to increased risk of false-positive results with the ELISA
- If requested, prior notice is required as kits are not routinely kept in stock and will need to be ordered.

Faecal culture

- Conducted on individual or pooled (up to 5 samples per pool) faeces:
 - a minimum of 30 g (70 mL screw-top container $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ full) of faeces is collected per rectum from individual animals and labelled sequentially from 1
 - samples should arrive at the laboratory within 48 hours of collection and must be kept chilled during this time
 - do not pool on-farm; pooling (where appropriate) will be done at the laboratory
- Can be conducted on faecal slurry (Herd Environment Culture) for dairy herds only:
 - see [JD Herd Environmental Culture Test Protocol](#) for collection protocol instructions
- Please contact the laboratory for pricing
- Turnaround time of 14-16 weeks
- Individual animal identification and sampling records should be kept so that reactors can be identified for further testing if required

Tissue culture and histopathology

- Conducted on slaughtered cattle
- Please contact the laboratory to discuss sampling requirements and costs.

All costs associated with assurance testing for JD, including the consignment of samples to the laboratory and resolution testing of reactors, is borne by the submitter. In addition to the testing costs, there is a laboratory processing fee per submission.

If you have any questions regarding the collection or submission of samples for JD testing, please contact the laboratory and ask to speak with the Duty Pathologist.

Contact us

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