



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Teres Lambert
Phone 847-838-2966
tlambert@animalagriculture.org

Johne's Disease Testing Brochures Free to Producers

BOWLING GREEN, KY—It is estimated that one out of 10 cows going through a livestock auction facility has Johne's disease, and a vast majority of producers selling these animals have no idea that they are infected with Johne's disease. Producers simply know that the animals are thin and have unresponsive chronic diarrhea. In the case of dairy cows, milk production is also significantly down, and, in the case of beef cows, weaned calves are also lighter than they should be.

Johne's disease experts maintain that dairy and beef cows are leaving herds way too fast—before they are tested for Johne's disease. They note that producers who have culled one or more animals for unresponsive chronic diarrhea combined with reduced milk production and thin condition should suspect and test for Johne's disease.

"Johne's disease is a slow and progressive bacterial disease of the intestinal tract that affects ruminants and is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis*," states Dr. Michael Carter, National Johne's Disease Control Program Coordinator, National Center for Animal Health Programs, USDA-APHIS-VS. "Infected animals can shed large numbers of the disease-causing bacteria in their feces, leading to contamination of feed and water sources without ever showing clinical signs. Infected animals can also shed the bacteria in their colostrum and milk, and infected dams can pass the disease on to their offspring."

Johne's disease is estimated to be present in 68 percent of U.S. dairy operations and in eight out of 100 U.S. beef herds. A 1996 National Animal Health Monitoring Systems study found that dairy herds with a low Johne's disease clinical cull rate experience an average loss of \$40 per cow while herds with a high Johne's disease clinical cull rate have on average of \$227 per cow loss, with losses resulting from reduced milk production, early culling and poor body condition at culling. Although a dollar amount has not been estimated for Johne's disease in beef herds, Johne's-infected beef cows are known to produce less milk resulting in lighter calves at weaning and can be slower to breed back.

"The new brochure is a result of work undertaken by the National Johne's Education Initiative, a USDA-APHIS-VS program designed to help educate producers about Johne's disease," states Michele Vise-Brown, chief executive officer of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture. "The testing brochure is written for the producer and helps producers become familiar with recommended test regimen for the detection of Johne's disease in cattle based on herd type and testing purpose. Thanks to USDA-APHIS-VS funding, this brochure is free to producers."

To obtain your copy of "Think Healthier Bottom Line —Test for Johne's & Know Your Herd's Johne's Disease Status" or to learn more about Johne's disease, please visit www.johnesdisease.org or call the National Institute for Animal Agriculture at (270) 782-9798.

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) is dedicated to programs that work towards the eradication of diseases that pose risk to the health of animals, wildlife and humans; promote a safe and wholesome food supply for our nation and abroad; and promote best practices in environmental stewardship, animal health and well-being. NIAA members include producers, veterinarians, animal scientists, researchers, state and federal officials, and agribusiness executives. More information is available at www.animalagriculture.org.

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