# New approach to Bovine Johne's Disease

**Dairy strategies to manage BJD**

- **Hygienic calf rearing helps to reduce new infection in the herd**
- **Assurances in the Dairy Score assist with risk-based trading**
- **The higher the Dairy Score, the lower the BJD risk**
- **Former Cattle MAP levels are accommodated in the revised Dairy Score**

The new national approach to Bovine Johne's Disease (the BJD Framework) will allow producers to manage BJD as part of their farm biosecurity risk management rather than the previous regulatory controls. This will help producers to make informed decisions about the risks associated with purchasing livestock.

BJD is a chronic, incurable disease of adult cattle. Symptoms include diarrhoea, reduced milk production, weight loss and eventually death. The disease is mainly spread through ingestion of contaminated faeces (usually in calf-hood) with the infection usually introduced to a herd by the purchase of an infected animal.

The key changes to the existing situation include:

- A focus on industry biosecurity measures to manage Johne's disease
- Deregulation and removal of zoning: most state jurisdictions removed regulation by July 1 2016 (some jurisdictions are still consulting nationally)
- Ceasing quarantine of properties as a control measure
- Movement to a market-driven approach where producers manage risks according to their business needs - for example if planning to trade cattle
- As of November 1 2016, the Australian Johne's Disease Market Assurance Program for Cattle will transition to alternative industry assurance systems

What will it mean?

- For the dairy industry the National Dairy Industry BJD Assurance Score or Dairy Score has been simplified to provide a framework to underpin risk-based trading and as a pathway for improving a herd's BJD status.
- Hygienic calf rearing continues to be a critical control measure to minimise the spread of BJD in dairy herds and it also protects calves from other infectious diseases
- Producers will now be the cornerstone of the new biosecurity approach
- Producers are able to incorporate JD into their on-farm biosecurity planning
- Buyers encouraged to ask for livestock health information when purchasing cattle

Dairy Australia's Robin Condron, said the new industry programs provide a clear guidance for dairy farmers to reduce the impact of clinical Johne's disease, to minimise the spread of *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis* infection and if required to provide high level of assurance of low risk status for producers trading cattle.
The BJD Dairy Score allows dairy farmers to compare the risk of BJD in groups of cattle when buying or selling stock. The higher the score, the lower BJD risk.
The costs of regulatory BJD compliance with Cattle MAP have been reduced. Producers now have responsibility to maintain the assurance measures in their herd. Progress to achieve improved BJD assurance has also been simplified

The new Dairy Score provides for transition of former Cattle MAP herds and outlines the features and revised requirements to maintain their high level of assurance.
Dairy Australia's 3 Step Calf Plan aims to limit calf contact with adult cattle and sources of manure to minimise the risk of BJD and other disease, including calf scours. Implementing the 3 Step Calf Plan is an excellent way to reduce the risk of BJD and improve the overall health of calves.

The Johnes Disease Calf Accreditation Program (JDCAP) is an audited calf rearing program designed to minimise spread of BJD from adult cows to calves. JDCAP provides a structured approach and additional assurances that calves have been protected from infection. JDCAP raised calves have a lower risk of contracting BJD than non-accredited calves. Cattle reared under JDCAP also benefit from a higher Dairy Score for BJD which is an advantage for farmers that buy or sell cattle.

**The Animal Health Australia website features a webinar for the new arrangements on the Cattle MAP (https://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/endemic-disease/market-assurance-programs-maps/cattlemap/).**