



# Understanding bovine Johne's disease statuses

Updated: December 2005

AG0916

ISSN 1329-8062

Duncan Worsfold, Echuca

*Bovine Johne's disease (BJD) statuses allow cattle herds and properties to be classified according to their risk of having BJD. These statuses are nationally recognised.*

Every herd and property in Victoria has a BJD status that is based on the documented history of the disease in the herd, or on the property. Farmers and stock agents can use this information when buying cattle or land to help ensure that the commodity they purchase will suit their requirements.

To ensure uniformity of statuses in all states of Australia, there is a national set of guidelines known as the national Standard Definitions and Rules for BJD (SD & R's).

Under the SD & R'S, the status of herds are defined as follows:

## Infected (IN)

An infected herd is one in which;

- a BJD-infected animal has been detected in the herd, within the last 5 years. The infected animal could be either bred on the property or purchased or
- an infected animal has been introduced and there has been potential for transmission of infection within the herd or the potential for transmission cannot be ruled out, and all high risk animals cannot or have not been identified and isolated from the herd or
- infection by sheep strains of M paratuberculosis has been identified and there is evidence of spread of such infection among cattle or other susceptible species in the herd, and which has not been the subject of an approved property disease eradication program since the most recent detection of infection.

## Suspect (SU)

A herd is 'Suspect' if there is sufficient evidence to classify the herd as suspect, for example:

- it has had infected cattle detected since 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1991, but more than 5 years ago, and has been on an *approved control program* or
- a herd containing susceptible animals has been grazed on contaminated land or
- cattle have been purchased from an infected herd or

- cattle sold to another property are later found to be infected or
- it contains cattle with signs suspicious of BJD or that have blood tested positive to BJD but tests to confirm BJD have not been performed or
- eradication of BJD has been attempted, but not under an *approved property disease eradication program*; or
- an infected animal has been introduced, but the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) is satisfied there has been little or no potential for spread of BJD to the herd, or all exposed susceptible cattle have been culled for slaughter or
- a herd contains infected cattle or camelids in which sheep strains of M paratuberculosis have been identified and there is no evidence of spread to other susceptible species in the herd or investigation of the herd is incomplete.

A 'Suspect' status can be resolved by the CVO obtaining sufficient evidence to remove suspicion of infection. One or more herd tests may be necessary.

## Restricted 1 & 2 (RD1 & RD2)

A 'Restricted' herd is a previously 'Infected' (IN) herd that is undertaking an *approved test and control program*. It must also have achieved one or more negative herd tests commencing at least 12 months after the last known infected animal was removed from the herd. RD1 status is acquired after the first negative herd test. RD2 can be obtained 2 years later, after another one or more negative herd tests. For the purposes of interstate certification, a 'Restricted' herd is still considered to be infected.

## Tested Low Prevalence

A Tested Low Prevalence herd is a previously infected (IN) herd which is undertaking an *approved test and control program* for BJD. It must have met the herd management and testing requirements of that program for at least the previous two years, have had a minimum of two annual herd tests, and an average annual rate of reactors and clinical cases in the past two years of 1.5% or less or less for cattle tested over 2 years of age. When testing 4 year of age and older the cut off rate is 2%. High-risk cattle in a TLP herd are identified and may only be

sold for slaughter. While there are no 100% guarantees when buying dairy cattle, cattle purchased from a TLP herd are generally lower risk than cattle from a 'Non-Assessed' dairy herd.

### Tested to CattleMAP Standard

A herd 'Tested to CattleMAP Standard' is one that had not previously had an assessed status (ie. was NA) but which has undergone testing on the herd equivalent to a sample test under a CattleMAP program in the last 12 months with negative results.

A previously 'Infected', 'Restricted' or 'Suspect' herd that has further negative herd test two years after achieving RD2 status may progress to this status with CVO approval. For the purposes of Vendor Declarations, a 'Tested to MAP Standard' applies for 12 months, after which status reverts to Non-Assessed if there is no further testing (and no evidence or suspicion of JD).

### Non-Assessed (NA)

A herd is 'Non-Assessed' if:

- it has no previous history of BJD, or where any suspicion of BJD has been resolved to the satisfaction of the CVO **or**
- the last confirmed or suspect case of BJD was prior to 1<sup>st</sup> January 1991 and the owner has carried out an *approved control program* to the satisfaction of the CVO.

***It is important to note that a herd status of 'Non-Assessed' should not be taken to imply freedom from BJD. It means exactly that: 'Non-Assessed', that the herd has not been assessed for the presence of BJD. For dairy herds in particular, buying from a NA herd provides little assurance against introducing BJD.***

### Check test

Check Tested herds are 'Non-Assessed' herds that have, within the previous 12 months, either blood tested or faecal cultured at least 50 adult cattle, with negative results. The cattle are selected with bias towards older and introduced cattle. These herds have a lower risk of having BJD than other 'Non-Assessed' herds.

### Monitored negative (MN)

Monitored Negative 1, 2 or 3 (MN1, MN2 or MN3) are assessed herd statuses under CattleMAP. CattleMAP is a program providing the highest assurance that cattle do not have BJD. CattleMAP involves risk assessment, good management and blood testing of cattle over 2 years. The MN number refers to the number of negative herd tests that the herd has completed. The higher the MN number, the higher the assurance that the herd has minimal risk of BJD (ie. MN3 is lower risk than MN1).

***In Victoria, an additional program has been created to provide further information on the BJD status of dairy herds. This is in the Johne's disease calf accreditation program (JDCAP).***

### Johne's disease calf accreditation program (JDCAP)

JDCAP has been introduced to encourage dairy farmers to raise their calves in a BJD-safe environment. Managing calves during their first twelve months of life to minimise contact with the manure and effluent of adult cattle is the cornerstone to BJD control. If BJD is present but not yet diagnosed in a herd (eg: came in with a recently purchased cow), managing calves to minimise the spread of BJD is essential to limit the impact of this disease on the herd. JDCAP is ideal for farmers intending to sell stock with minimal risk of being infected with BJD. This program is also suited to farmers who do not wish to blood test their cattle. JDCAP herds are issued with certificates and audited annually.

### Vendor declarations

Farmers intending to purchase cattle are strongly advised to seek a written BJD Vendor Declaration. This declares the status of the herd and should be obtained prior to purchasing the cattle. There is a nationally approved vendor declaration form available from DPI which allows producers to make a declaration as to the status of their herd.

Alternatively, the "Dairy BJD Assurance Score Declaration Form", or the National "Beef Only" Animal Health Statement can be used for this purpose.

### Further information

Further information about understanding bovine Johne's disease statuses can be obtained from Animal Health staff at your nearest DPI office or on the DPI external site: <http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/farming/bjd>.

*The previous version of this note was published in March 2003.*

**The advice provided in this publication is intended as a source of information only. Always read the label before using any of the products mentioned. The State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.**