

Guideline

Johne's Disease Guideline

Version: 1

1 Guidelines

The chief executive may make a Guideline under section 107 of the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (the Act) about ways of discharging the general biosecurity obligation.

The Johne's disease Guideline provides ways in which a person is to discharge their general biosecurity obligation in relation to Johne's disease under the Act.

The contents of this Guideline may be taken into account when considering whether a person has or has not discharged their general biosecurity obligation or otherwise complied with provisions of the Act. However, it cannot be presumed that a person who has failed to follow this Guideline has breached the person's general biosecurity obligation or otherwise failed to comply with a provision for the Act.

2 Johne's disease

Johne's disease is caused by infection with *Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis* and leads to thickening of the intestinal wall, mal-absorption of nutrients, and clinical signs of progressive emaciation, diarrhoea especially in cattle, "bottle-jaw", weakness and death.

Although the growth of the bacteria and progression of disease are slow, the progression and severity of disease may be stimulated by stress. Typically, clinical Johne's disease is seen in dairy cows during their second or third lactation when in maximally negative energy balance.

Johne's disease is spread by faecal excretion and subsequent ingestion by a susceptible animal. Cattle, sheep, goats, deer and South American camelids are all susceptible at any age, but susceptibility is greater as juveniles, especially for cattle.

Spread between properties is usually due to the movement of animals (either deliberate or stray) although lateral spread between adjoining properties without known animal movement is common for Johne's disease in sheep in Australia.

Due to the slow growth and slow onset of a specific immune response, pre-clinical infection is difficult to detect by testing. The greatest value of testing is to monitor a herd/flock by testing a large number of animals, for which all-negative results indicates a low-risk of infection in the herd/flock and animals derived from that population. A positive result to a blood test is usually, but not always, indicative of infection but confirmation of infection requires a positive result to a culture of faeces or tissue or microscopic examination of tissues.

The highest risks of spread of Johne's disease into and within Queensland are the movement of livestock from high-risk populations interstate and from properties where infection is known or suspected. The highest risk interstate populations are the dairy industry of southern states and the sheep industries of the central and southern highlands of NSW and Victoria and Tasmania.

3 Obligation to notify of presence of Johne's disease

Under section 38(1) of the Act, Johne's disease is restricted matter category 1. Under section 42 of the Act, if a person becomes aware of Johne's disease or the person believes or ought reasonably believes Johne's disease is present in an animal, the person must notify an inspector of the presence of Johne's disease as soon as practicable but within 24 hours of first becoming aware or suspecting.

Become aware or believe or ought reasonably believe means the person either is aware of signs of Johne's disease in an animal for which there is objective evidence of Johne's disease such as tracing information or test results, or has received a positive result for a confirmatory test (rather than a screening test) Johne's disease.

4 General Biosecurity Obligation – Johne's disease

Under section 23 of the Act, a person who deals with biosecurity matter or a carrier or carries out an activity, has an obligation (a **general biosecurity obligation**) to take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent or minimise the biosecurity risk.

A person on whom a general biosecurity obligation is imposed must discharge the obligation. The maximum penalty for not complying is:

- (a) if the offence is an aggravated offence – 3000 penalty units or 3 years imprisonment; or
- (b) if the offence is not an aggravated offence – 750 penalty units or 6 months imprisonment.

Introducing carriers of Johne's disease into Queensland poses a significant risk of introducing the disease because of its prevalence in other states. A person who deals with Johne's disease carriers has an obligation to take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent the introduction into and spread of Johne's disease within Queensland. The obligation is imposed on all people who deal with carriers of Johne's disease including those who buy, supply, keep, breed, or give away animals. This means anyone who sells, possesses, buys or acts as an agent has a general biosecurity obligation in relation to introducing into Queensland, moving within Queensland, or retaining Johne's disease carriers.

A **Johne's disease carrier** is cattle, sheep, goats, deer and South American camelids.

Reasonable and practical measures – Vendors and suppliers

A reasonable and practical measure that a vendor or supplier must take to discharge their general biosecurity obligation when selling or supplying a Johne's disease carrier is to supply a health statement/declaration to a buyer or receiver that provides information about the health of the animal on which a person may assess the likelihood of the animal being infected with, and spreading, Johne's disease.

The obligation to supply a health statement/declaration applies particularly when an animal is known or reasonably presumed to be infected with JD.

The health statement/declaration must not be false, incomplete or misleading.

However, the requirement to provide a health statement/declaration does not apply to animals that are entering Queensland and going direct to slaughter.

Reasonable and practical measures – Buyer or receivers

A reasonable and practical measure that a buyer or receiver must take to discharge their general biosecurity obligation when buying or receiving a Johne's disease carrier is to obtain a health statement/declaration for a Johne's disease carrier prior to introducing the animal onto their property, whether the animal is moving into or within Queensland. The health statement/declaration must provide information about the health of the animal on which a person may assess the likelihood of the animal being infected with, and spreading, Johne's disease.

This Guideline does not limit a buyer or receiver of animals from asking for any other information that may assist in determining the health status of an animal in order to assess the risk of introducing Johne's disease onto a place.

However, the requirement to obtain a health statement or other statement about the health of the animal does not apply to animals that are entering Queensland and going direct to slaughter.

Reasonable and practical measures – Containment and control

Animals which are reasonably known or suspected of being infected with Johne's disease, and their effluent or excrement, should be retained within stock-proof boundaries.

Animals which are reasonably known or suspected of being infected with Johne's disease, including animals which have been introduced with a significant likelihood of being infected, should be managed to minimise the likelihood and impacts of spread of infection. Examples of such management are by isolating the animals, retaining them only for growing out and fattening and slaughter, vaccination, calf separation, paddock rotation, decontaminating paddocks after exit, and monitoring health by regular testing.

An animal which is known or reasonably presumed to be infected and is showing clinical signs of Johne's disease is unsuitable for human consumption due to increased risk of secondary infections.

5 Related and reference documents

<i>Biosecurity Act 2014:</i>	www.legislation.qld.gov.au
Biosecurity Queensland JD information	www.daf.qld.gov.au
National JD information	www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au
Farm biosecurity planning, including template health statements/declarations	www.farmbiosecurity.com.au

Internal use only

Author Name: Fiona Ferguson
Title: Principal Policy Officer Strategy and Legislation

Contributing author/s Name: Lawrence Gavey
Title: Principal Policy Officer

Endorsed by Name:
Title:

Approved by Name: Allison Crook
Title: General Manager Animal Biosecurity and Welfare

Issue/approval date 24/8/2016

Revision history

Version no.	Approval date	Comments
1.0	07/06/16	Draft circulated for industry comment
1.1	23/06/16	Revised draft after consultation
1.2	24/8/2016	Approved version - GMABW

eDocs reference: #4838047