

National Johne's Management Plan Guidance Notes – Phase II

Introduction

The Action Group on Johne's is an open forum for industry stakeholders interested in tackling Johne's disease. The Action Group on Johne's is chaired by Lyndon Edwards, a dairy farmer from Gloucester, who is also a Director of OMSCo and Chairman of Dairy UK's Farmers' Forum. The secretariat support to the Action Group on Johne's is provided by Dairy UK.

The National Johne's Management Plan (NJMP) was developed by the Action Group on Johne's to help manage and then reduce incidence of Johne's disease in dairy cattle. The NJMP is not a national 'test and cull' initiative or a one size fits all approach. It is a coordinated initiative for the benefit of the industry and about choosing strategies that meet the needs and aspirations of individual farmers.

Phase II of NJMP, seeks to manage and reduce the incidence of Johne's disease on our farms through implementing one of the six strategies agreed by the NJMP group, and monitored on each farm by BCVA accredited vets.

This document intends to explain the process to providing a compliant declaration including how to establish status, think through a risk assessment and agree a written, agreed Johne's disease control plan for your farm.

The operational requirements of Phase II are:

- Members of the NJMP would require their associated farmers to obtain annually over three years (from 1st January 2017) a signed declaration by a BCVA Johne's Accredited Veterinary Adviser that they will be implementing one of the six strategies specified by the National Johne's Management Plan.

What you need to do to comply with the NJMP

Phase II, Year 1

By **31st October 2018** the NJMP declaration would confirm that the farmer had:

- undertaken to assess their risks and herd status and,
- put in place the necessary management information, equipment, husbandry and resources to implement the agreed control strategy.

Only vets that have completed and passed the BCVA training programme to become a **BCVA Accredited Johne's Veterinary Advisor (BAJVA)** are permitted to sign the declaration – over 700 vets are accredited, go to <http://www.actionjohnesuk.org/bcva-action-johnes-accredited-veterinary-advisors/> to find your nearest vet. This training is designed to ensure that vets fully understand the principles of the NJMP and how to select the correct strategy for the herd.

It is important to be realistic about the timescale, it requires close collaboration between farmers and their vet. In order for the vet to sign the declaration, three steps must be taken:

1. **An on farm Johne's disease risk assessment** – this will be carried out by the [BAJVA](#) ideally using a formal risk assessment tool. Risk of disease entry and spread will be identified [to help determine the correct control plan for the herd](#).
2. **An assessment of herd Johne's disease status** – this requires a screening test. The minimum testing requirement to determine status for the NJMP is either a 30-cow screen or a cull-cow screen. A bulk milk test is not sufficiently sensitive to identify infection at a prevalence less than 5%, and therefore is not acceptable for the NJMP. Discuss with your herd vet, the best option for your farm.
3. **A written Johne's management plan** – this will be based on the findings from steps 1 and 2 and must be agreed between the farmer and the vet. One of the six NJMP control strategies will be selected, and a bespoke management plan created for the herd, which fulfils the objectives of the NJMP and sets out the management tasks required.

We would advise that the work towards year 1 is initiated soon (if you haven't done so already), within your herd health planning. To ensure the chosen Johne's management plan will work, a thorough risk assessment must be carried out by the [BAJVA](#). It is suggested that this is done before turnout, whilst more time is available and in advance of the 31st October 2018 deadline. Further information about the steps to be taken to complete can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B.

A copy of the declaration can be found at <http://www.actionjohnesuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/NJMP-Declaration-May18.pdf>

What are the plans for the future?

The NJMP plan is ongoing and for the plan to work and be effective the risks, status and control plan should be adapted to ensure the plan is practical and effective

Phase II, Year 2

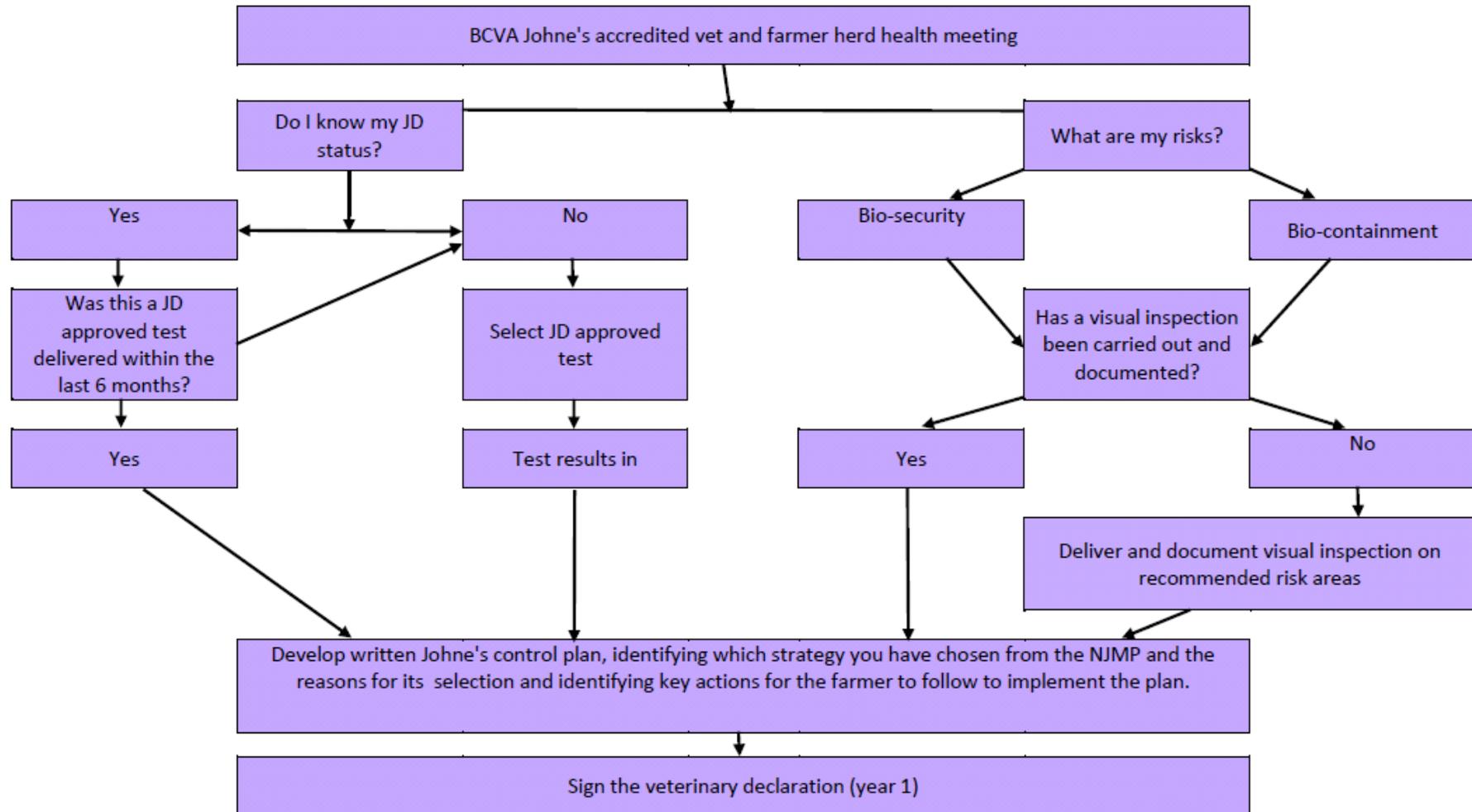
By 31st October 2019 the NJMP declaration would confirm that the farmer at the time of the consultation:

- had reassessed their risk and status and,
- was correctly utilising the management information, equipment, husbandry and resources to implement the strategy effectively
 - For all three years if deficiencies are identified by the vet then these would have to be rectified by the farmer before the declaration could be signed. Alternatively, the chosen strategy could be changed to enable compliance with the resources available.
 - The farmer will make a copy of the signed declaration available to their milk purchaser if they were requested to do so.



Purchasers will provide the NJMP Delivery Team annually with information on the number of farmers obtaining veterinary declarations using a standard questionnaire developed by Action Group on Johnes.

Appendix A How to implement the veterinary declarations in Phase II (Year 1)



Appendix B What do I have to do to ensure that the farmer is compliant with the National Management Plan?

Do I know the Johne's disease status on farm?

What is appropriate assessment of Johne's status?

- The establishment of Johne's status can be achieved by a variety of surveillance approaches. The approach taken by the vet will depend on farmer aspiration, resources and suspected prevalence.
- The minimum acceptable level of testing for ELISA antibody (blood or milk) is the 30 cow targeted screen of 3-5 year old, thin, scouring, poorer production, high cell count or suspect cows.
- Structured Pooled faecal tests (PCR/ culture) have been shown to be effective as a method of defining herd status.
- A bulk milk test is not sufficiently sensitive to identify infection at a prevalence less than 5%.
- Further guidance on testing approaches are provided within the veterinary technical manual. The aim of the surveillance is to establish as expediently as possible the likely prevalence within the herd.
- The purpose of the surveillance is to provide sufficient information to ensure the correct control strategy is in place.

What are the Johne's disease risks on farm?

What constitutes a risk assessment?

- The prevalence of Johne's disease within a herd is driven by the risk of disease entry (biosecurity risks) and risk of spread within the herd (biocontainment risks)
- A risk assessment should follow a structured format. The NJMP is not prescriptive about the risk assessment tools used as there are a number of established systems available and being used already.
- A structured format is required to ensure that the process is sufficiently robust, that risk areas are identified and in subsequent years the notes and observations can be correlated with any changes in risks.

What do I have to do to perform a risk assessment?

- The risk assessment requires you to have a clear understanding of the key risk areas on the farm.
- The risk assessment requires a **recent visual inspection** of the key areas of risk transmission e.g.
 - Calving areas,
 - neonatal management,
 - colostrum management,
 - youngstock housing and
 - potential risks of adult to adult transmission.
- The NJMP vet must have visited the farm recently and have undertaken a structured evaluation of these risks in sufficient detail to help identify the most appropriate Johne's disease control and risk mitigation plan for the herd.

The written control plan

What is an appropriate written control plan?

- For the Johne's disease programme to be effective, the risks identified on the farm must be controlled. To ensure that the plan is as robust as possible the farmer is required to have a **written control plan**.
- The NJMP does not prescribe the format of the plan as there are accepted templates that can be used.
- The plan should be agreed, bespoke and sufficiently detailed that the key tasks for controlling Johne's disease are defined to ensure compliance.
- In year 2 onwards, the farmer will be asked to sign a declaration that he/ she is complying with this written plan.

Appendix C Useful resources for further information

Action Johnes- further advice on the NJMP, including further information on the six control strategies, case studies and a copy of the veterinary declaration

<http://www.actionjohnesuk.org/>

Myhealthyherd- online tool for assessing disease risks and developing and storing control plans

www.myhealthyherd.co.uk

USA – American risk assessment tool

<https://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/AnimalHealth/Diseases/JohnesRiskAssessmentsandDevelopmentManagementPlans.PDF>

Irish – review booklet on JD <https://www.enfergroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/frequently-asked-questions-from-AHI.pdf>