

MEDIA RELEASE

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Johne's disease in cattle: Transitional arrangements end 30 June 2017

Cattle producers across Australia are being urged to implement an on-farm biosecurity plan by 30 June 2017 in order to take up the Johne's Beef Assurance Score (J-BAS) or maintain their current score.

A biosecurity plan is the first line of defence for producers in ensuring their property is not only free of Johne's disease (JD) but all endemic and exotic diseases and pests.

With the end of the transitional period approaching, Western Australia will continue to require a J-BAS of 8 for any cattle entering the state from south eastern states (J-BAS of 7 from Queensland herds), while the Northern Territory will require a score of 6.

The remaining states and territories have overturned their JD regulations in favour of a market-driven approach which prioritises on-farm biosecurity.

While J-BAS is voluntary, buyers across the country may request a J-BAS score before agreeing to purchase animals, making J-BAS a vital tool for anyone looking to buy or sell livestock said Duncan Rowland, Animal Health Australia's Executive Manager of Biosecurity and Product Integrity Services.

"Both beef and dairy producers can maintain market advantage by using either the J-BAS or Dairy Score tools, to assure buyers of the JD status of their herds. These scoring systems allow producers and buyers to assess their JD risk, and make informed purchasing decisions," said Mr Rowland.

Producers who do not implement a biosecurity plan by 30 June 2017 will have a J-BAS of 0.

Herds previously classified under the Market Assurance Program for Cattle (CattleMAP) or existing in the Free Zone in Western Australia have commenced with the highest possible J-BAS of 8. Herds in the now defunct Protected Zone, Beef Protected Zone or classified as Beef Only in the Management Zone commenced with a J-BAS score of 7.

In order to maintain J-BAS 7 or 8 producers must implement a biosecurity plan, overseen by a veterinary adviser, by 30 June 2017 and complete their first triennial Check Test within 12 months. A documented biosecurity plan, overseen by a veterinarian, reduces the risk of JD entering the property or spreading to other herds.

Producers who have held a score of 7 or 8 during the transition period, but who do not undertake the testing requirements, can still maintain a score of 6 by implementing their own biosecurity plan.

Resources for implementing a biosecurity plan can be found at www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/jd-cattle-tools/ and www.lbn.org.au/farm-biosecurity-tools/.

Given that JD can be difficult to eradicate from an infected herd, sound biosecurity practices are essential in ensuring the disease remains under control in Australia.

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About Animal Health Australia

Animal Health Australia works in partnership with our Members and other stakeholders to keep Australia free of new and emerging diseases and to improve animal health, enhance market access and foster resilience and integrity of the Australian animal health system.