

Colorado Dairy News Johne's Disease Survey

A two page questionnaire concerning Johne's Disease (JD) was mailed with the November 1997 Colorado Dairy News. The circulation of this newsletter consists of 565 people in the region and about 50 people at CSU. The questions were answered as yes/no or by a graded response (1-5 indicating little or none to high level).

Respondents: A total of 114 responses were received by February 1, 1998. Seventy-one responses were from producer/owners and 43 from others involved in the dairy industry. The latter included herdsmen (7); veterinarians (8), consultants (8), industry representatives (10), heifer growers (3), an "others" (2 extension agents, 1 hoof trimmer, 1 research chemist, 1 student and 2 non-specified)

Characteristics of the producer/owner respondents: (N=71)

These respondents owned dairies that have been in business in the region for an average of 28 + 17 years (range 1-80 yrs).

The herd size averaged 523 + 601 dry and milking cows (range 48-3400). One year earlier these dairies had slightly smaller herds, 502 + 601 dry and milking cows (range 0-3400).

Forty-two producers estimated their production at 68 + 9 lbs milk/cow/day (range 48 - 83 lbs milk/cow /day). Thirty-one producers estimated their production at 22,889 + 2607 lbs milk/cow/year (range 1600 - 2800 lbs milk/cow/year).

While 62 of the 71 producers raised replacement heifers, 32 of the 71 producers also purchased replacement heifers. Only 16 of the 71 producers contract out any replacement heifer raising.

JD has been diagnosed, by specific tests or veterinary diagnosis in the last 10 years, on only 12 of the 71 dairies (16.9%) responding. However, only 7 of the 71 producers (<10%) responding to the survey used specific tests to diagnose JD. Six of the producers that used specific tests have had JD diagnosed on their dairies. Only 33% or (24/71) use strategies to prevent introduction of JD to their herd. Five respondents answered "don't know" to this question, the only question to generate such a reply.

Producer/owner responses: (N=71)

1. Seventy-three % (52/71) of the respondents perceived Johne's disease to be a moderate to severe problem for the dairy industry.

2. Seventy-six % (54/71) read the September 1997 Johne's Disease article in the Colorado Dairy News. Of those that read the article 87% felt the article improved their knowledge or heightened their concern about the disease by 50% or more.

3. A series of questions focused on the respondents' familiarity with management and prevention of JD.

Most producers (73% or 52/71) expressed a mid to low level of familiarity with the organism that caused JD.

Most producers (77% or 55/71) expressed a mid to low level of familiarity with management practices used to control JD.

Most producers (82% or 58/71) used a mid to low degree of management practices to control JD.

Most producers (85% or 60/71) expressed a mid to low degree of familiarity with the specific tests used to detect JD.

4. In contrast to the above set of questions, 77% (55/71) were concerned at a mid to high level about introducing JD into their herds.