



What Is Johne's Disease?

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Johne's disease results from a chronic bacterial infection of the intestines and other tissues. It is transmitted from an infected animal to herdmates primarily via the fecal-oral route. Johne's disease is predominantly subclinical, meaning infected animals do not show outward signs of illness. This makes identifying infected cattle and managing the disease difficult. However, with diligence and patience, a herd's level of infection can be reduced.



Weight loss, a sign of Johne's disease, is evident in this Guernsey cow. Signs of this disease are not always as obvious.



This Holstein cow does not have any apparent health problems, but could be shedding Johne's disease bacteria.

How Many Herds Are Infected?

Given the noteworthy subclinical nature of the disease, it is difficult to determine the exact number of herds infected with Johne's disease. Best estimates indicate that infection likely exceeds 50 percent in countries with significant dairy industries.¹

Could My Herd Be Infected?

Johne's disease can be found on farms where cows are not showing clinical signs. Work with your veterinarian to assess your herd's risk and conduct appropriate tests. The best way to determine whether your herd is infected is to conduct an environmental screening test.

What Animals Get Johne's Disease?

Johne's disease typically affects domestic ruminants such as cattle, sheep, and goats. Camelids and ruminant wildlife such as deer and bison can also contract Johne's disease. Rabbits have been shown to excrete the bacteria that cause Johne's disease into the environment.¹¹



Johne's Disease Facts

Johne's is pronounced 'Yoh-neeZ' or 'Yo! knees'

Also called paratuberculosis, Johne's disease is caused by bacteria related to the cause of tuberculosis.

The bacterium's full name, *Mycobacterium avium* sub-species *paratuberculosis*, is sometimes abbreviated MAP.

Johne's disease is very difficult and cost prohibitive to treat. Practically speaking, it is incurable.

Johne's disease can affect domestic and wild ruminants.

**Guernsey cow (L) photo credit: Michael Collins, DVM, Univ. of Wisconsin Johne's Information Center.*



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