

Johne's Disease



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[Johne's Information Center](#),
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CAUSE: Johne's (pronounced "yo-nees") Disease is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis* (MAP) which infects the intestine and other tissues of cattle, sheep, and goats.

EFFECT: Infected animals usually do not show signs of disease until years after first being infected. Clinical signs include foamy diarrhea and weight loss in the face of a good appetite. Milk production also declines. Animals showing clinical signs are soon culled.

How is Johne's Disease spread? Infection primarily occurs in youngstock who have consumed water and feed sources contaminated by fecal material from mature animals that are shedding the Johne's organism. The infection can also be spread through colostrum. The bacterium that causes Johne's can survive well in the environment. Contaminated manure spread on fields may be infectious for as long as a year.

How can Johne's Disease be prevented? Prevent the exposure of newborn and growing young stock to manure from the adult herd. Separate calves, lambs, or kids immediately from their dam and feed colostrum from a cow, ewe, or doe that tested negative for Johne's. Herds that have a low incidence of Johne's must be careful not to bring it in with new animals, including bulls, rams, or bucks.

Does Johne's Disease affect people? There are ongoing studies of the potential connection between Johne's Disease in ruminants and Crohn's Disease in humans. Given the nature of the Johne's organism and slow progression of these diseases, it will be awhile before there are conclusive results.

What if there is an outbreak? Johne's is not highly contagious so its presence on a farm is unlikely to resemble an outbreak. However, Vermont supports Johne's risk assessment and status programs through the Agency of Agriculture. For more information visit the Agency Web site.

For more information on Johne's Disease, see:

[University of Wisconsin Johne's Information Center](#) Web site

[Johne's Information Central](#) Web site

[USDA APHIS: Johne's Disease Information](#)

[Vermont Agency of Agriculture: Vermont Cattle Health Improvement Project \(VCHIP\)](#)

[Uniform Program Standards for the Voluntary Bovine Johne's Disease Control Program](#)

Also see the related handbooks [How to Do Risk Assessments and Management Plans for Johne's Disease](#) and [Handbook for Veterinarians and Dairy Producers](#), a guide for Johne's disease risk assessments and management plans for dairy herds.