NOVEL APPROACHES TO JOHNE’S DISEASE CONTROL IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Peter Orpin1,2,3, Richard Sibley3,4, Hannah Pearse5

1Park Vet Group, Leicester, 2Special Lecturer in Cattle Medicine, Nottingham University Vet School, Nottingham, 3Director, Myhealthyherd.com, Leicester, 4Partner, West Ridge Veterinary Practice, Tiverton, 5Technical Manager, National Milk Records, Chippenham, UK

Introduction: This paper illustrates how the use of a web based health planning program (www.myhealthyherd.com) combined with a vet training program has been used effectively to enhance voluntary Johne’s control programs in dairy herds in the UK.

Objectives: The objective of the myhealthyherd program was to provide a visual traffic light web based solution which would link vets, farmers and labs together and allow them to assess the risks of disease entry, disease spread, store lab results and assign disease status. This then provided a single comprehensive accessible shared web based disease management program allowing for practice based, regional and national analysis of risks and status of 7 main diseases of cattle (BVD, IBR, BTV, Lepto, Neospora, Johne’s and TB).

Materials and methods: 160 vets were received refresher training in the use of the program and provided practical advice on JD control using risk based management. Risk assessments were completed during farmer training or health planning activities within private practice. Surveillance was typically conducted using 30 cow targeted sampling of 4-8 year old high risk cows using the Pourquier Milk ELISA kit.

Results and discussion: The use of structured web based program has facilitated a structured, low cost approach to infectious disease management.

Risk of Johne’s disease introduction was considered high due to expansion of herds and the need to replace stock due to forced culling for bTB or FMD. Analysis of 659 herds demonstrated that 57% of farms purchased several groups of animals over the preceding 10 years. In 62% of herds youngstock occasionally or frequently grazed pastures heavily grazed by rabbits. Only 5% of herds imported slurry from herds of unknown JD status and spread this on their youngstock pastures. 31% of herds had never purchased any animals in the previous 10 years.

A further risk assessment of disease spread illustrated that 62% frequently calved cows in communal calving areas and 75% frequently or occasionally fed milk from sick/MASTITIS cows to replacement heifer calves.

These risks were translated into a red amber or green icons based on likelihood of disease entry and spread.

Conclusions: The proactive risk based approach utilising a single web application enabled a structured “predict and prevent” model to be adopted enabling private veterinarians and farmers to cost effectively manage Johne’s disease.

Keywords: Johne’s, myhealthyherd, ParaTB, Health Planning