# VETLINE NEWSLETTER

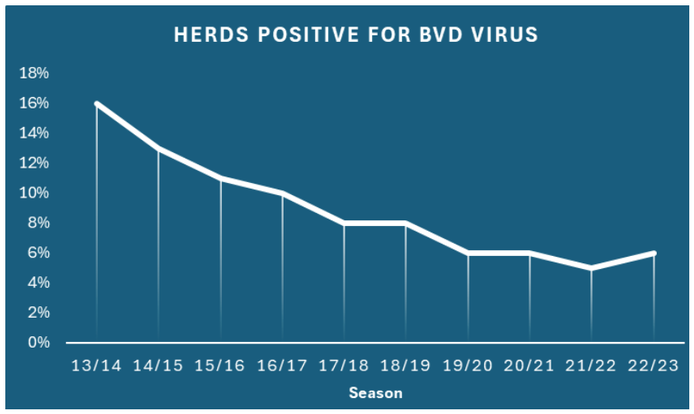
Summer 2024

## Focus on BVD - Megan Weir

### Protecting your herd

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) is a highly contagious viral disease affecting cattle, known to cause significant economic losses in the dairy and beef industries. The virus can lead to a range of clinical presentations, from mild symptoms to severe conditions, and can also be found in the animals you least expect. As we find ourselves in a critical time of the year for ensuring herd health, it is essential to understand the prevalence of BVD and to ensure that herds are adequately protected.

Over the past 14 years, efforts to control BVD have made major inroads, with prevalence of the virus reducing over the 10-year period from 2013 to 2023. The percentage of herds in which the BVD virus was detected, through testing in LICs Animal Health laboratory, has fallen from 16% to 6%. With BVD prevalence having seemingly reached a plateau, the disease remains a significant concern for cattle farmers as it continues to affect a considerable portion of the national herd and illustrates that transmission continues to occur despite the effective testing and vaccination tools available.



## Focus on BVD continues...

Protecting herds from BVD requires a multifaceted approach with the identification and removal of persistently infected (PI) animals being the first step to understanding and controlling the situation on farm. PI animals are a constant source of infection and presence during the critical mating period can lead to devastating outcomes with respect to in-calf rates, creation of PI calves and the associated on-farm management, financial and animal welfare effects.

Regularly monitoring your herd for BVD is important, especially if new animals are introduced. Testing of calves is critical to efficient control so PI animals can be removed early. Calves can be tested using either ear notch or blood samples. Aside from calves, animals that may bring the virus with them include, purchased replacement stock, heifers returning from grazing, service bulls and any beefies brought in. Individual testing provides assurance that introduced animals are non-PI, and bulk milk monitoring provides a tool to flag when a new infection has occurred.

# Johnes Disease Awareness Events

LIC are continuing to collaborate with vets across the country to deliver informative and valuable information to farmers regarding Johnes Disease. The most recent events held in the Lower North Island were in Greytown, Palmerston North and Dannevirke, alongside South Wairarapa Vets, Totally Vets and Dannevirke Vet services. These events allowed farmers to come and learn about the Johne's disease bacteria, how it is transmitted, and practical veterinary management advice to help control Johne's disease on farm in an informal setting with complimentary food and drink.

It is fantastic to see farmers wanting to engage and learn about this endemic disease, and work together with vet clinics to provide the most valuable information.

If you would like to join LIC to run a Johnes Awareness event, please email testyourcows@lic.co.nz

## Hear about one of our recent events:

We had the pleasure of joining VetEnt & Petfirst Veterinary to host a free event in Otorohanga on 21 November.

Together, we discussed the diagnosis, on-farm impact, and best approaches to managing Johne's Disease - a critical issue for New Zealand's dairy farmers.

It was great to see so many farmers in attendance, and special thanks to our expert panel: local farmer Michael Bennett, VetEnt Agri veterinarian Jane McDermott, and Shona Pryor and Tracey Pinny from our Animal Health Team.

Johne's Disease is costing New Zealand dairy farmers between $40-90 million annually, and events like this are key in helping farmers better manage it.

# MilkOmics® Mastitis Prototype Trial

As part of the Resilient Dairy Research Programme, LIC has spent the last four years analysing the milk metagenome in relation to mastitis. We're now working with vets/farmers to understand the value this DNA sequence-based technology could deliver. There are 14 vets participating throughout New Zealand, who collectively manage approximately 50 farms, with an acute or chronic mastitis problem, from whom we're receiving monthly bulk milk samples. Regular feedback with these vets, to understand the on-farm utility from the DNA sequence results, will help us shape the future of early and accurate mastitis detection.

For more information on this research, you can view our Resilient Dairy - Disease and Wellbeing Screening webinar.

Additional information can be found in HoofPrint Volume 41 Number 2 June 2023 ISSN 1172-580X pg 14-15.

From the team at LIC, thank you for your continued support and wishing you all the best for 2025.