



Department of
Primary Industries

BIOSECURITY ACT 2015

Discussion Paper:

Johne's Disease in Cattle

May 2016



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Submissions on this Paper close on 9 July 2016

Email your submission to: submissions.biosecuritylegislation@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Post your submission to:
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For more information

See: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact

Email: submissions.biosecuritylegislation@dpi.nsw.gov.au

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (June 2016). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

Summary

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) will repeal the *Stock Diseases Act 1923*, which currently includes various regulatory controls and powers with respect to Johne's disease in cattle (previously referred to as Bovine Johne's Disease).

Concurrently to these developments, Animal Health Australia conducted a review of the *National Bovine Johne's Disease Strategic Plan*¹. After extensive consultation, a revised framework² for the management of Johne's disease in cattle was released mid-February 2016.

The NSW Government has considered and endorsed the revised framework. It aligns with the Act, providing for flexible, risk-based decision-making and shared responsibilities in the management of biosecurity risks such as Johne's disease in cattle. Under the proposed arrangements, producers will be able to make their own decisions about disease risk management that best suits their own circumstances and build their own capabilities to determine how they will best manage their risk, within the context of their obligations.

It is anticipated that changes under the revised framework will commence in NSW in July 2016, with the current movement conditions under the *Stock Diseases Act 1923* being revoked.

In light of these forthcoming changes, it is proposed under the Act that NSW will continue to manage the risks associated with Johne's disease in cattle in accordance with the revised framework. Specifically it is proposed that this risk is managed using the **general biosecurity duty**, with a **mandatory measure** prescribed by regulation that will require a **duty to notify** of suspected or infected cases of Johne's disease in cattle.

Matters concerning Johne's disease in sheep have been the subject of a separate [Discussion Paper: Ovine Johne's Disease](#) that was released for comment in December 2015.

Background Information

What is the problem?

Johne's disease is a bacterial disease that affects various species of animals. In Australia, Johne's disease has been found in cattle, sheep, goats, deer and camelids. It affects the intestines and causing wasting and death of infected animals. Infected animals may look healthy, but shed high numbers of bacteria particularly in the 12 months before they show signs of disease. Signs of disease generally develop in middle age and lead to the death of the animal. In cattle, young calves from birth to 12 months of age are most susceptible to Johne's disease infection.

Johne's disease is one of a number of endemic diseases which impact cattle health.

Why is it important to us?

Johne's disease in cattle can cause significant economic costs as it affects production and also has major impacts on the animal's health and welfare. NSW cattle producers need flexible tools that allow them to make risk based decisions that:

1. will assist them manage the risk of introducing infection into a district, sector or herd where Johne's disease is not suspected to be present; and

¹ Full details of this review are available at <https://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/endemic-disease/bovine-johnes-disease/national-bjd-strategic-plan-review/>

² BJD – Where to from here? A Fresh Approach to the Management of Johne's Disease in Cattle: Management Plan for Cattle Production Conditions

2. will assist them to minimise the impact of Johne's disease infection on their business where Johne's disease is present.

What is the outcome we are seeking?

The desired outcome is to manage the impact of Johne's disease by preventing or minimising the risk of cattle herds becoming infected and if they do become infected provide a sound risk based framework for managing the disease and its impact on market access.

Current management arrangements

Johne's disease in cattle is declared to be a disease for the purposes of the *Stock Diseases Act 1923*.

As of May 2016, NSW is recognised by Animal Health Australia as a Beef Protected Area in which the overall prevalence of Johne's disease in beef herds is very low. However, it is accepted that at least 10 per cent of dairy herds are infected.

In NSW Johne's disease in cattle is currently controlled by prescriptive regulatory measures. Infected and suspect beef properties are quarantined or provide undertakings not to move animals. Tracing of infected herds is performed to identify other properties that may also be infected, and risk assessments and testing where relevant are conducted on those herds, if they are deemed a transmission risk. Although these regulatory controls have assisted to minimise the risk of spread of Johne's disease in cattle, herd managers are responsible for implementing biosecurity measures to protect their herds.

For suspect or infected dairy herds there are no movement restrictions; however cattle moving from a dairy holding must be accompanied by a completed [Dairy BJD Assurance Score Declaration Form](#) (unless specifically exempt).

Producers moving, buying or agisting beef cattle within NSW are strongly encouraged to use a National Cattle Health Statement. Use of the statement is voluntary for movements within NSW, but once completed and signed, it is a legal vendor declaration.

Proposed Management under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015

The Act introduces the concept of shared responsibility via the inclusion of a **general biosecurity duty**. The general biosecurity duty requires any person dealing with biosecurity matter or a carrier of biosecurity matter and who knows or ought to know of the biosecurity risks associated with that activity to take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate the risk as far as is reasonably practicable.

The key concepts of the *National Johne's Disease Strategic Plan* align with the principles underpinning the Act. It is proposed that the risk of Johne's disease in cattle in NSW will continue to be managed according to the National Plan, with a **general biosecurity duty** and a **mandatory measure** prescribed by regulation to notify the presence or suspected presence of Johne's disease in cattle.

Under the general biosecurity duty, cattle producers will be required to demonstrate that they have taken reasonably practical steps to prevent or manage the risk of spread of Johne's disease to and from their herd. This could include implementation of a property biosecurity plan to mitigate the risk of spreading Johne's disease, and using risk assessment tools for the introduction of cattle, such as requesting a [National Cattle Health Statement](#) when purchasing or agisting cattle.

Cattle transporters, agents, saleyards operators, exporters and others who deal with cattle or cattle products will also have a general biosecurity duty for actions to manage the risk of Johne's disease. Local Land Services will continue to record properties which have notified of clinical

Johne's disease or where definitive testing has confirmed infection. This record will be used by staff of Local Land Services as the basis of certification for export or for property sales.

A summary of current and proposed management arrangements is outlined at Appendix 1.

Examples on complying with the general biosecurity duty are outlined in Appendix 2.

Further material on how you can discharge your general biosecurity duty may also be outlined in Industry Standards, Codes of Practice and guidelines, or through other advisory or education material.

What do you think?

We value your comments on how we can improve our biosecurity system and look forward to receiving your input into this important process.

Please complete the survey on 'Johne's Disease' at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BovineJohnesDisease>

Alternatively, submit your feedback **by 9 July 2016** via [email](#) or post to:

Biosecurity Act 2015

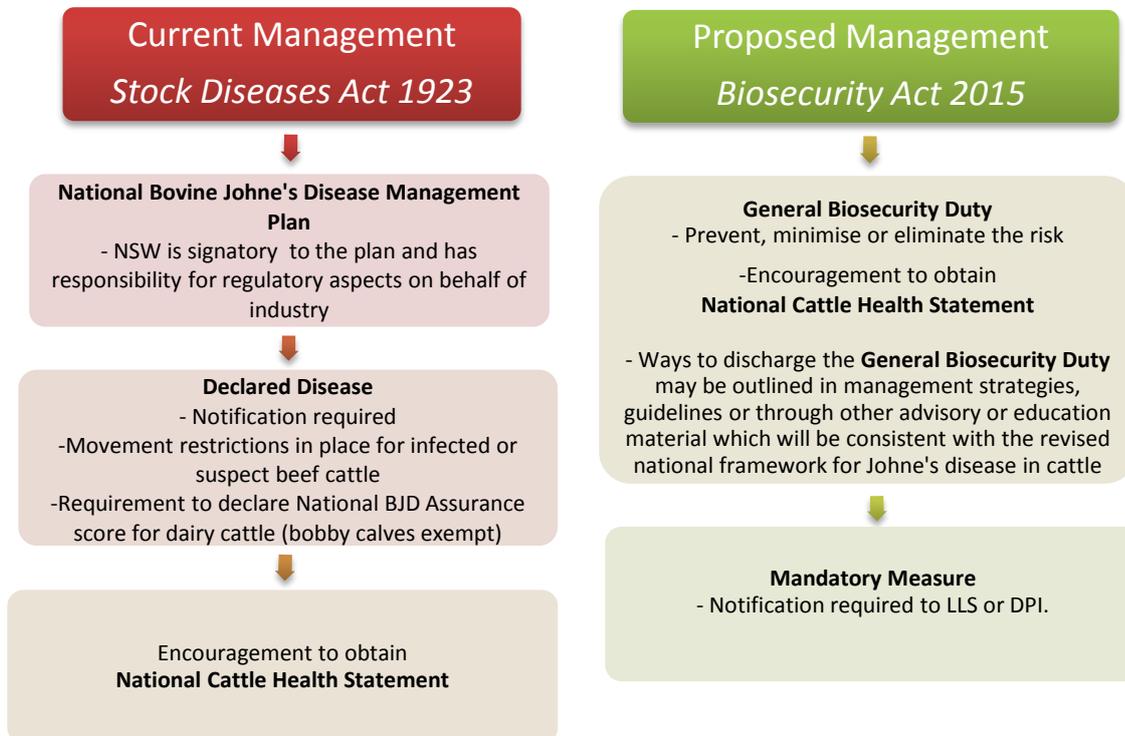
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For more information about the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and regulatory framework, please visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact.

Appendix 1 – Summary of current and proposed management of Johne's disease in cattle.



Appendix 2 – Complying with the general biosecurity duty.

Risk: The majority of properties that introduce Johne's disease to cattle do so by inadvertently introducing one or more animals through purchase, agistment or straying that look healthy but are infected with the bacteria causing Johne's disease.

People who own cattle

People who own cattle will have a general biosecurity duty. Ways of discharging that the duty with respect to Johne's disease might include:

- Developing and implementing a property biosecurity plan to mitigate risks of Johne's disease. The plan should consider the likelihood of spread and adverse consequences (both within the property and to other properties).

People who introduce cattle

People who introduce cattle will have a general biosecurity duty. Ways of discharging that the duty with respect to Johne's disease might include:

- Requesting a Statement with a numerical Johne's disease risk/assurance score or a summary of the statement prior to a purchase from (online sale portal, livestock agenda and/or saleyard operator).
- Make enquires to ensure the health status of the animal(s) is at an acceptable level of risk. Make further enquires of property management practices.

Vendors of cattle

Vendors will also have a general biosecurity duty with respect to Johne's disease and ways of discharging that the duty might include:

- Supplying an accurately completed health Statement. (Note: Once completed and signed this is a legal vendor declaration and can be the subject of civil action if it contains misleading and deceptive information).
- Making and retaining relevant records (such as Johne's disease management protocols, and the origin and status of introduced animals to support health declarations. and
- Reviewing risk assessments; for example, if Johne's disease infection is confirmed on a property which has previously sold livestock declared as low-risk for Johne's disease, notifying receivers of the amended health risk and high-risk animals.

There is a greater potential to spread Johne's disease from infected stud/seed stock producers and the consequences of this spread will generally be higher than for commercial producers.

Persons and organisations that transfer cattle

Persons and organisations that transfer cattle will have a general biosecurity duty. Ways of discharging that the duty with respect to Johne's disease might include:

- Providing a copy of the National Cattle Health Statement (Statement) to the person at the saleyard who receives the cattle (cattle transporter)
- Making the Statement or a summary of the Statement available to potential purchasers prior to the sale (online sale portal, livestock agent and/or saleyard operator); and
- Providing the purchaser with a copy of the Statement promptly after the sale (agent and/or saleyard operator and/or transporter).