

USDA Approves Test for Johne's

The University of Minnesota (U of M) Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory has received U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) approval to offer a new, rapid and low-cost diagnostic test for Johne's disease.

Johne's disease is a bacterial infection (*Mycobacterium paratuberculosis*) causing intestinal inflammation in ruminants. It poses a significant threat to dairy and beef production industries.

"Controlling Johne's disease is one of Minnesota's top agricultural priorities," says Jim Collins, director of the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in the College of Veterinary Medicine. It is estimated that, overall, 25% of Minnesota dairy herds are infected, and 40% of large dairy herds with more than 300 milk cows are infected. "We have been working closely with the Minnesota Board of Animal Health, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Minnesota livestock producers to fight this serious and growing problem."

Developed by U of M scientists Kay Faaberg and Carrie Wees, the new DNA-based PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test enables the Veterinary Diagnostic

Laboratory to test hundreds of animals at a time. It takes only 48 hours to complete, compared to four months for the standard test, and is affordable for livestock producers. The test is available only at the U of M Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

"We have made great progress, but it isn't enough. Our intention is to further increase the speed and reduce the cost of the test," said Jeffrey Klausner, dean of the Veterinary College. "We won't be satisfied until Johne's disease is well on the way to being controlled in Minnesota."

For more information contact Jan Williams, U of M College of Veterinary Medicine, at (612) 624-6228.



Editor's Note: For more information regarding Johne's disease, visit www.angusjournal.com or www.angusbeefbulletin.com. Click on "Search Back Issues" located above the publication logo. Once to the search page, enter Johne's as the key word, and click search. This will access a list of stories published in the respective publication. The stories are viewable with Adobe Acrobat, for which a free download is available from the site.