

We need to eliminate Johne's



The best way to protect ourselves from any inconsistencies or doubts is simply to eliminate Johne's once and for all.

Johne's disease has been the focus of scientific debate lately, and that discussion could spill over into the public arena.

In July, both the American Society for Microbiology news magazine and the *Journal of Dairy Science* addressed the question of whether pasteurization destroys *M. paratuberculosis*, a bacterium found in the raw milk of Johne's-infected cows. The *Journal of Dairy Science* article was optimistic about the ability of a standard pasteurization

technique — known as continuous-flow HTST — to kill the organism.

"Consumers in the U.S., I don't feel, have anything to worry about regarding the adequacy of (continuous-flow HTST) pasteurization to kill paratuberculosis," says Judy Stabel, researcher at the National Animal Disease Center in Ames, Iowa, and author of the *Journal of Dairy Science* article.

Nevertheless, the very fact these questions are being raised should be of concern to dairy producers everywhere.

Several dairy producers contributed to a recent discussion on the Dairy-L e-mail network, with practically everyone agreeing that we need to eliminate Johne's. One producer commented, "While the link between Crohn's disease (in humans) and Johne's has not been proven, and may not exist, that is a question I'd rather not have asked in the national press."

It doesn't help, either, that reports are getting into the scientific literature from other countries where pasteurization techniques are different than they are in the U.S. Currently, agricultural officials in the United Kingdom are assessing whether *M. paratuberculosis* organisms exist in retail-ready milk. But, pasteurization techniques are different in

the UK than they are here, which could lead to different conclusions, depending on the method being used.

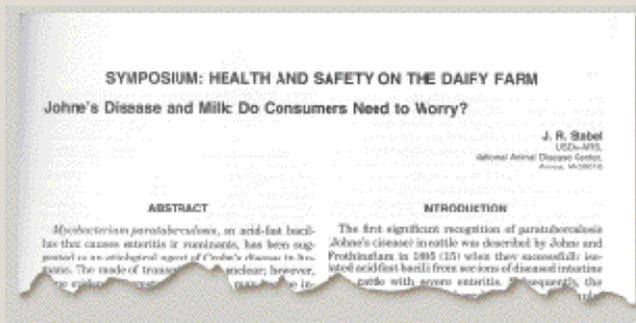
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In mid-July, the Western States Dairy Producers Trade Association spearheaded a meeting involving breed associations, government agencies, Farm Bureau, the National Milk Producers Federation, and others. The group agreed that an incentive and indemnity program is needed to encourage producers to participate in voluntary Johne's-control programs. In other words, producers would be reimbursed if they tested for Johne's and found positive animals that needed to be culled. The group discussed various funding options, most of them involving direct payments from the U.S. Congress.

It's good to see the various groups getting together to address this issue. Hopefully, it's an indication that the dairy industry is finally getting serious about eliminating Johne's.

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RECENT DISCUSSION IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS



Johne's disease — and the ability of pasteurization to kill a bacterium found in the milk of Johne's-infected cows — was a topic in the July issues of the *Journal of Dairy Science* (top) and the American Society for Microbiology news magazine.