



Frequently Asked Questions About Johne's Milk ELISA Testing

Which cows should I test?

The laboratory will test any milk samples that are submitted appropriately. Ideally, you and your veterinarian should determine which animals you will test and when, before starting your testing program.

What stage of lactation should I test?

As above, the laboratory will test any milk samples that are submitted appropriately. When you establish your testing plan with your veterinarian, you should determine what stage of lactation milk samples will be submitted for Johne's testing. Research indicates that except for colostrum and possibly peak milk, laboratory results should be relatively similar throughout most lactations.

What should I do with the results (positives)?

This should be decided in your testing plan with your veterinarian before you begin testing. The goals of your Johne's disease control program and level of positive results should be part of your discussion with your veterinarian.

What do specificity and sensitivity mean?

The sensitivity of a test is the percentage of infected animals that are identified as positive by that test. The specificity is the percentage of non-infected animals that are identified as negative by that test.

I had a cow with a high positive test and I tested her again and she was negative. What does this mean?

As far as the test result goes, this means that enough antibodies were detected in the initial test that the test was read out as a positive result; however, a lower level of antibody was detected in the second sample. There are a number of possible explanations as to why this occasionally happens, but you should speak with your veterinarian about the test results and trends that you are seeing in your herd.

Can I use the Milk ELISA test on goats?

The laboratory will test milk samples that are submitted appropriately for testing; however, the Parachek test was approved for use on bovine milk samples, so it is not recognized as an approved test for goats at this time. You should contact your veterinarian about an appropriate testing plan for your goat herd.

If I vaccinate for Johnes, can I get accurate results with the Milk ELISA?

Since the milk ELISA detects antibodies made against the bacteria that causes Johne's disease and it has been reported that vaccinated animals make antibodies in response to the vaccine, our current ELISA tests would not provide reliable test results in vaccinated animal. You should speak with your veterinarian about a testing protocol that is appropriate for your vaccinating herd.