

Johne's PCR Testing

ABOUT: Johne's disease (pronounced 'yo-knees') is a contagious, chronic, and usually fatal infection that primarily affects the small intestine of ruminants, especially cattle, sheep, and goats. It is caused by *Mycobacterium avium subspecies paratuberculosis* (MAP). The disease leads to long-term diarrhea, weight loss, and reduced productivity.

SYMPTOMS: Clinical signs may take years to appear. They include chronic diarrhea, rapid weight loss despite good appetite, and decreased milk production. In goats and sheep, diarrhea is less common.

PREVENTION: Since there is no cure, management focuses on preventing the spread of infection. This includes testing animals, removing infected individuals, and maintaining strict biosecurity to minimize exposure to contaminated manure, feed, and water.

GETTING TESTED: PCR testing provides a rapid and highly sensitive method to detect Johne's disease by identifying MAP DNA in fecal samples.

- Collect at least 10 grams of fresh feces directly from the rectum to avoid contamination. Samples must not touch the ground.
- Place feces in a 10 mL ear notch tube or another leakproof sterile screw-cap container.
- Ship samples overnight on cold packs (do not place tubes in direct contact with ice packs).

A positive PCR result indicates the presence of MAP DNA but does not necessarily mean the animal has clinical Johne's disease.

Johne's PCR tests are processed and results reported on Wednesday.

