

Survey of Iowa beef veterinarians on Johne's disease in cow-calf operations

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Introduction

Johne's disease has historically been considered a disease of dairy cattle with little impact on beef herds in the United States. Over the past several years, a substantial increase in the number of Johne's positive submissions from Midwestern beef operations has been observed at the Iowa State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, suggesting an increase in the prevalence of disease in the cow-calf industry. Thus, there is an urgent need to better understand the current knowledge of beef veterinarians related to Johne's disease and assess the impact of the disease in the cow-calf industry.

Materials and Methods

Iowa Veterinary Medical Association members serving beef cow-calf operations were recruited to complete an online anonymous survey using the Qualtrics platform during 2017. Of approximately 500 members self-identifying as having a bovine interest, 85 survey responses were received and included in the analysis.

Results

Of the veterinarians surveyed, 70% reported diagnosing a beef animal with Johne's disease within the past 12 months. The majority of respondents (79%) indicated that

0-10% of herds within their practice area have had a confirmed Johne's positive animal in the last 5 years. However, 33% estimated that greater than 20% of herds have had a clinical case with or without confirmatory testing in the last 5 years (ranging from 30-90% estimated infected). Most veterinarians (55%) agreed that while Johne's disease is not common in beef cattle, the incidence is increasing. The vast majority of veterinarians (91%) surveyed felt the need for more continuing education related to Johne's disease in beef cattle, including information on whole herd testing and prevention strategies.

Significance

Results indicate that Iowa veterinarians believe that the incidence of Johne's disease in beef cattle is increasing, warranting further research and continuing education efforts towards better understanding best practices related to control strategies in the beef industry.