NJMP/Phase III FAQs

1. **What's new for Phase III?**

Phases I and II of the NJMP sought to control and reduce the incidence of Johne's disease. The objective for Phase III is unchanged and the basic structure of the NJMP remains the same, requiring regular vet/farmer dialogue focusing on risk management and the implementation of an appropriate control strategy. This will continue to be backed up by annual review and certification.

Key changes for Phase III include:

- All herds must obtain an average test value (ATV) for their herd to help assess the level of disease present and allow progress to be tracked over time.
- The minimum requirement to generate an ATV will be a 60-cow random screen. The 30-cow targeted screen is no longer an acceptable option.
- The creation of a national Johne's Control Index with a target of ATV 5.5, with a goal to achieve this by 2030.
- The ability, through the creation of a national Johne's Tracker database, to track progress nationally using ATV, % incidence and other drivers of infection within herds.

2. **What is the objective of Phase III of the NJMP?**

To control and then reduce the incidence of Johne's disease in dairy cattle with the aim of achieving a national mean average test value of less than 5.5 by 2030.

3. **Why have these changes been made?**

Until recently, there was no method of quantifying progress by prevalence within herds, and the six control strategies within the NJMP are designed to reduce incidence rather than track progress. Since the development of the Johne's Tracker and the Tracker database, we have started to be able to track progress at a national level as well as at a herd level. We have made excellent progress over the last few years, meaning that the benchmarks within Tracker reports have become out of date, with nearly 75% of quarterly testing herds now falling into the top performance category.

The benchmarks have been updated to reflect this progress, and the NJMP now requires that all farms obtain an ATV to be able to track their own progress against time and to benchmark themselves against a national aspirational standard (Johne's Control Index).

4. **Is the NJMP still a Red Tractor requirement?**

Yes, having an NJMP in place on your farm is a Red Tractor requirement for dairy for both farmers and processors.

5. **What is an Average Test Value?**

The average test value (ATV) is the mathematical average (mean) of all the Johne's tests carried out at a single point in time. It's a continuous variable rather than a binary result and it can be used as a simple proxy for Johne's load within a herd.

6. **What are the benefits of using the Average Test Value as a measure of Johne's control?**

ATV is a useful metric because it moves the focus away from thinking of Johne's tests as positive/negative. The nature of Johne's disease means that an infected cow may not always test positive. Using ATV rather than counting the number of positives accounts for all cows in the herd, including those that are low test positives and inconclusive.

7. **Can I obtain an Average Test Value from blood tests?**

Yes, you can obtain an ATV from blood tests by taking the average of all the test results. However, blood and milk results are not equivalent to each other. This means that if you are creating an ATV from blood testing, you can use this to track the trend on your own farm, but you should not compare yourself to the national JCI of 5.5.

There isn't a mechanism to accommodate blood test ATVs in the NJMP at the moment. It's easy with the milk testing as all labs use the same test kit and cut off so all are comparable. With blood testing different kits and cut offs are used so we would not be able to have a single ATV figure for blood testing. Also, we would need a 'conversion' factor to make them comparable to the milk ATV and that would require significant work.

In light of this our advice is that you generate your own ATV using the blood test results, in the same manner (add up all of the numerical results and divide by the number of animals tested). Report this on the declaration but stating that this is based on blood testing. Whilst we can't use the ATV as part of our national figure, and your farm can't benchmark themselves against the 5.5 target, you can use the ATV generated to track progress in that herd over time so definitely still useful at a herd level.

8. **What is the Johne's Control Index?**

The Johne's Control Index (JCI) is a fixed target that individual farmers and the industry can aim for. It has been set at an average test value of 5.5, which we want to achieve nationally by 2030. Herds that consistently achieve an ATV below 5.5 have the disease well controlled. The new infection rate is normally low, priority culls are largely absent and the disease is more of a minor

nuisance than a big problem. We want to pursue acceptable control, not eradication, which is extremely difficult.

9. **How many herds are already achieving the JCI?**

The national ATV at the end of 2024 was 6.71. At the moment, about 41% of herds in Great Britain are already achieving the JCI of 5.5. Three out of four herds have reduced their ATV since 2020.

10. **Do farmers need to do a 60 cow random screen as well if they are already doing whole herd testing?**

No, if a farmer is already doing whole herd testing then they do not need to do a 60 cow random screen in addition to this.

11. **Why would a farmer do a whole herd screen if a 60 cow random screen is enough to get an ATV?**

The 60 cow screen is a minimum testing requirement, and represents testing for surveillance. It can generate an estimated ATV to give a reasonable idea of the level of Johne's disease in a herd and give you the ability to see whether a farm is making progress over the years. The 60 cow screen cannot give individual information for every cow in the herd so a whole herd test (WHT) is still the gold standard. A WHT represents testing for control, because it gives information about every cow in the herd, enabling you and the farmer to make management, breeding and culling decisions for individuals. Testing the whole herd more regularly eg. quarterly gives even better control of the disease.

12. **What is the difference between the 30 cow screen and the 60 cow random screen?**

The 30 cow screen was a targeted screen, where cows likely to be infected were deliberately chosen to hunt the disease out on-farm. The objective of the 60 cow screen is to provide a low cost method to estimate the ATV of a herd, and it is an appropriate level of surveillance for e.g. flying herds. To work properly, the cows must be selected randomly.

13. **How do I do a 60 cow random screen?**

There is guidance on how to do a 60 cow random screen on the Action Johne's website: Protocol-for-random-60-cow-screen.pdf

If you are undertaking your 60 cow random screen through a milk recording organisation, they will be able to provide practical instructions.

14. Have there been any changes to the declaration forms?

Yes. You now have to include an ATV for last year (if available – if you did a 30 cow screen last year, you will not have an ATV) and for this year. There is also space to include three SMART priorities (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound). These targets should be agreed between farmer and vet and are there to make sure you can hold yourself to account and have focus areas for the year. The declaration provides an opportunity to review progress and celebrate success, but also to optimise the plan and make sure you are on track to achieve the targets.

15. What are some examples of SMART goals I could put on my declaration form?

Some examples of high level SMART targets that could be adapted to your needs are:

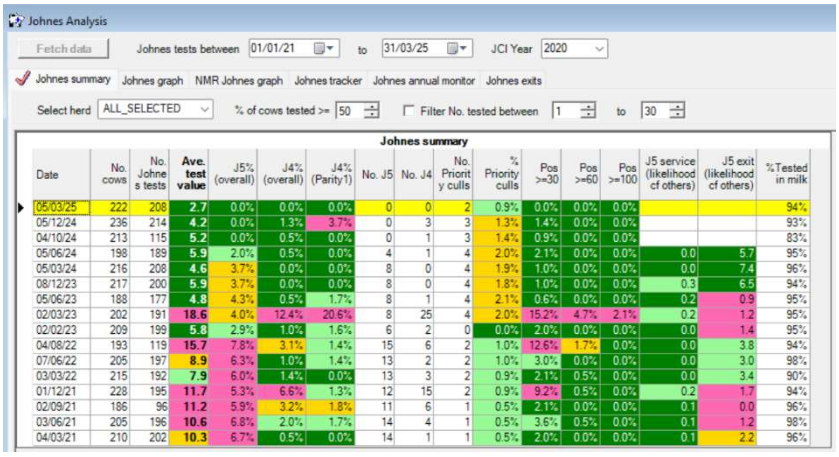
- Further training for all the farm staff on Johne's control – vet to carry out morning workshop in time for next herd health plan review (target date for completion)
- Highlight specific areas of the control plan that need attention or renewed focus e.g. identifying high risk cows with red ear tags and written breeding strategy specifying how to deal with those cows.
- Change of strategy from 'Improved Farm Management and Strategic Testing' to 'Improved Farm Management Test and Cull' based on continual improvement of the JCI over previous 3 years.

16. Where can I find the new declaration forms?

The declaration forms can be found on the Action Johne's website here: The declaration - The National Action Group on Johne's

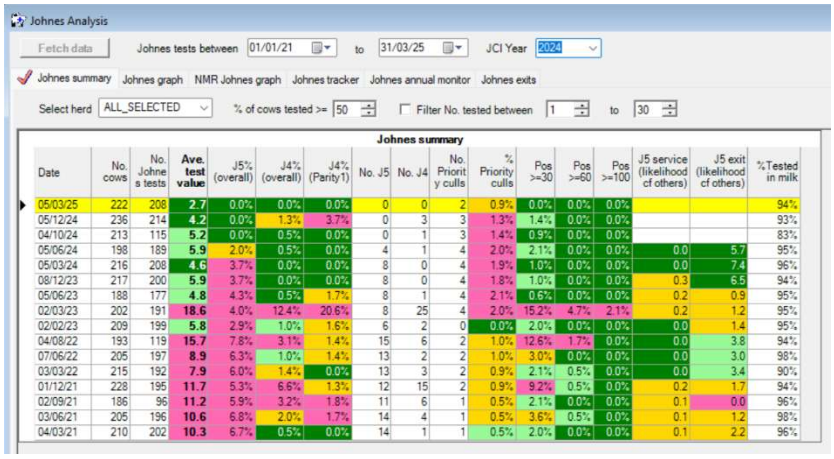
17. Why have the colours on the Johne's Tracker report changed?

The industry has made enormous progress over the last few years. This means that the benchmark values which tell us where the boundaries between the quartiles are now out of date. In essence, we have been using data from 2020 to benchmark herds in 2024. Using the 2020 data, about 75% of herds now appear to be in the top quartile. Action Johne's have therefore reset the boundaries between the quartile using more up to date data and are going to move to an annual resetting of the boundaries using the rolling average of the last three years so there is a more gradual change rather than a big jump. This means that the colours in the report might have changed, but it is important to note that the numbers in the report have not changed.



Date	No. cows	No. Johnes tests	Ave. test value	J5% (overall)	J4% (overall)	J4% (Parity1)	No. J5	No. J4	No. Priority culls	% Priority culls	Pos >=30	Pos >=60	Pos >=100	J5 service (likelihood cf others)	J5 exit (likelihood cf others)	%Tested in milk
05/03/25	222	208	2.7	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0	2	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%			94%
05/12/24	236	214	4.2	0.0%	1.3%	3.7%	0	3	3	1.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%			93%
04/10/24	213	115	5.2	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0	1	3	1.4%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%			83%
05/06/24	198	189	5.9	2.0%	0.5%	0.0%	4	1	4	2.0%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0	5.7	95%
05/03/24	216	208	4.6	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	8	0	4	1.9%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0	7.4	96%
08/12/23	217	200	5.9	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	8	0	4	1.8%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3	6.5	94%
05/06/23	188	177	4.8	4.3%	0.5%	1.7%	8	1	4	2.1%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2	0.9	95%
02/03/23	202	191	18.6	4.0%	12.4%	20.6%	8	25	4	2.0%	15.2%	4.7%	2.1%	0.2	1.2	95%
02/02/23	209	199	5.8	2.9%	1.0%	1.6%	6	2	0	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0	1.4	95%
04/08/22	193	119	15.7	7.8%	3.1%	1.4%	15	6	2	1.0%	12.6%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0	3.8	94%
07/06/22	205	197	8.9	6.3%	1.0%	1.4%	13	2	2	1.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0	3.0	98%
03/03/22	215	192	7.9	6.0%	1.4%	0.0%	13	3	2	0.9%	2.1%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0	3.4	90%
01/12/21	228	195	11.7	5.3%	6.6%	1.3%	12	15	2	0.9%	9.2%	0.5%	0.0%	0.2	1.7	94%
02/09/21	186	96	11.2	5.9%	3.2%	1.8%	11	6	1	0.5%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1	0.0	96%
03/06/21	205	196	10.6	6.8%	2.0%	1.7%	14	4	1	0.5%	3.6%	0.5%	0.0%	0.1	1.2	98%
04/03/21	210	202	10.3	6.7%	0.5%	0.0%	14	1	1	0.5%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1	2.2	96%

Before the boundaries were reset



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After the boundaries were reset – while some of the colours are different, none of the numbers have changed and the story of improvement remains the same

18. Where can I go for further information?

You can visit the Action Johne's website (Welcome - The National Action Group on Johne's).

You can email team@actionjohnes.org.uk or call 024 7601 6237.

You can watch AHDB's recent webinar on Johne's disease and Phase III here Johne's Disease Action Plan: Phase 3 Updates, Baseline Changes & What It Means for Your Farm

You can watch the BCVA's webinar for vets on Johne's disease and Phase III here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RYxUk16Ir8