

Frequently Asked Questions

'improved health, improved productivity'



General Administration

Is it free for Veterinary Practices to register for Herdsure?

Yes. Veterinary Practices have free access to the Herdsure Helpline and Veterinary Handbook by simply filling in Form A from the information pack or website. The Veterinary Handbook is available electronically and in hard copy.

How is the service administered?

Administration is carried out centrally from our Regional Laboratory at Newcastle. Veterinary enquiries are managed via the Helpline. Test samples should be sent to Newcastle RL in the first instance, but specific tests will be carried out at other AHVLA Regional Laboratories.

What is Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHeCS)

It is a self regulatory body for cattle health schemes in the UK. It is a non-trading organisation established by the British cattle industry for the control and eradication of non-statutory diseases by a set of standards to which all cattle herd schemes must adhere.

Is Herdsure regulated and licensed by CHeCS?

Yes. This applies to Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD), Leptospirosis, Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR) and Johne's Disease. When clients enrol for one or more of the Herdsure diseases, they will be offered the option of completing and signing a declaration form confirming their commitment to CHeCS rules and biosecurity conditions. However, if the declaration is not completed, it is still possible for the herd to follow the Herdsure programme and receive advice on the progress of elimination of disease, but certified accreditation will not be possible.

How does the Veterinary Surgeon enrol a client's herd?

Ask your client to fill in Form B, available in the information pack or on the website and return to AHVLA Newcastle (the address is on the form). If your client wishes to become CHeCS accredited, a completed declaration form D will also be required showing commitment to CHeCS biosecurity and testing rules.

NB: Please inform your client as soon as possible after registration, that the Farmers Handbook is available on the website as in some instances, bulk milk sample pots will be sent direct to the farm. An electronic version can be sent, if required.



Selling High Health Status Animals

Are new pen/sales cards available for selling animals from accredited herds (or those working towards it)?

Yes. Applications are sent out by Herdsure on request and a fee will be charged (please see website for details). Certificates of accredited disease free status are also issued providing the correct testing protocols and specified biosecurity measures have been implemented.

Herdsure Subscription and Testing Price

What is the subscription for Herdsure enrolled farms?

There is an annual subscription (non refundable) for each disease and based on the size of the herd (please see the website for details). The subscription fee covers administration, sample pots for bulk milk samples, postage paid labels and an annual Herdsure progress report.

Who will be invoiced for the testing and annual membership?

The veterinary practice will be invoiced directly by Herdsure and the client will be invoiced by the practice.

Is there a preferential test rate for Herdsure members?

Yes. There is a 5% reduction on the majority of the standard AHVLA test prices for the specific Herdsure diseases. Wherever possible, samples are pooled for testing to help control prices.

Is there regional funding available for herd health improvement?

In certain areas of the country, there is a small amount of direct funding for livestock disease testing. We suggest, that in the first instance you contact your local organisation managing this or your veterinary practice, and then, contact us.

For example: The Healthy Livestock Initiative, in the South West, provides funding for a small number of tests for Johnes's disease and BVD. Results of these tests can then be fed into the Herdsure Management System.

How much will it cost my client to eradicate a particular disease?

A disease cost calculator is available for you to work out approximate costs. Please contact Herdsure for further details.

Testing

Will a farmer be able to join in the first year for each of the diseases and then decide if they wish to focus on one or none of the diseases in future years?

Yes. Anyone can join Herdsure for any length of time and for any number of diseases, but, they must test the correct number of animals according to the protocol. The service has been designed to suit ALL herds.

How do I know how many animals to test for any of the diseases?

The Herdsure sampling, testing and management protocols take this into account. Once a herd is registered, the Herdsure Management System is linked to Cattle Tracing Scheme (CTS), which identifies the animals to be tested. A reminder will be sent approximately 2 weeks before the herd is due for testing. Please do not do any testing until you receive the appropriate paperwork.

NB: All samples must be recorded using the appropriate Herdsure sample form that includes a list of ear tag numbers (freeze brands are not acceptable). If an incorrect number of animals are sampled, it may delay the issue of results and delay the progression through the protocols.

Would I be required to keep records of test results and dates?

Minimal record keeping is required as the information is stored on the Herdsure Management System.

Can I take blood at same time for 2 different diseases?

Yes, but it is important that the blood sample is collected in the correct tube as different animals may need to be tested for different disease protocols.

What blood sampling tubes should be used?

Red top tubes - for Johne's disease, Leptospirosis, Neosporosis and IBR

Green top tubes - for BVD

A minimum of 4ml of blood is required for each tube.

How does Biosecurity impact on Herdsure?

Biosecurity is very important to the successful completion of herd health improvement programmes. Disease-specific biosecurity principles are included in the Veterinary and Farmer handbooks. The Herd Declaration Form, relevant for accredited herds, is issued at specific times during the programme and includes sections to be signed by the Owner/Responsible Manager and Veterinary Practitioner.

NB: It is the herd owner or managers responsibility to ensure that the biosecurity recommendations and management actions for the control of a specific disease, as described in the Herdsure protocol, have been implemented in the herd.

What is statistical blood sampling?

Statistical blood sampling is required within some protocols as it is a way of ensuring that the testing carried out is cost-effective for the farmer. The number of animals to be sampled in a management group is determined from tables in the protocols, which show exactly how many animals should be blood sampled to obtain 95% confidence that at least one sero-positive animal is detected if the group has been exposed to infection. If too few animals are selected, a diseased herd could be wrongly classified as disease free.

Specific Diseases

Neosporosis

How will a herd with proven Neosporosis enter Herdsure?

Level 2

What are the specific sampling times for Neospora?

Ten to four weeks prior to due calving date and at the time of abortion. Two negative tests are required.

Johne's Disease

Does Tuberculosis (Tb) testing impact on the Johne's disease test?

Yes. Blood/milk testing should not be carried out within 3 months of a tuberculin test. If a herd has recently tested for Tb please contact one of our veterinary consultants.

NB: It would be helpful if the Tb test date was added to your client's application Form B, particularly if the test was within the previous 3 months.

How will a herd with laboratory confirmed Johne's disease (within the last 5 years) enter Herdsure?

Level 2

How will a vaccination programme affect Johne's disease?

Vaccinated cattle will often test positive for ELISA, even if they are not infected. For this reason, the Herdsure service is only available to unvaccinated herds. The farm should not buy in replacements from vaccinated herds.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea

Where do herds that test free of BVD enter Herdsure?

A herd known to be free of BVD would enter Herdsure at level 1. However, if samples tested at that time confirm no evidence of disease, this enables the herd to progress straight to level 3. Further testing will be required in 12 months. If a herd is transferring from another health scheme, increased testing is not required. A Herdsure consultant can be contacted for more advice.

How will a vaccination programme affect BVD?

Vaccinated herds can participate in the Herdsure BVD programme as the testing regime is designed to allow this. Ideally samples from youngstock should be collected before they receive their first dose of vaccine. Some herd owners will prefer to maintain vaccination once active infection has been eliminated – as an added aid to bio-security.

NB: There is very little evidence that vaccination alone i.e. without the removal of persistently infected cattle, will control active BVD infection in a herd. If BVD vaccination is used on the farm and youngstock are required to be tested, blood samples should be collected before they receive their first dose of vaccine.

How will a herd with proven BVD in the previous 12 months fit into the protocol?

Level 2

Liver Fluke

When is the best time for Herdsure members to drench for Liver Fluke?

Non-Lactating Cattle

Treatment 1: in winter, as soon as possible after the receipt of a positive liver fluke result.

Treatment 2: in the subsequent May, following receipt of a positive liver fluke result.

Treatment 3: in the subsequent autumn or early winter (possibly at housing) following the receipt of a positive liver fluke result.

Lactating Cattle Drying off normally (see Veterinary Handbook)

For further information about flukicide treatments, please see www.noahcompendium.co.uk or www.norbrook.co.uk

When should I test for Liver Fluke?

November, December, January

Leptospirosis

How will a vaccination programme affect Leptospirosis?

When cattle in the herd are vaccinated against *L. hardjo*, they produce an antibody response which cannot be distinguished from the antibody response to a field infection. As a result, vaccinated cattle are entered at Level 2 of the testing protocols as they cannot be considered free of infection. Vaccinated herds can not become CHecS accredited.

How will a herd with proven Leptospirosis in the previous 12 months enter Herdsure?

Level 2

Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis

How will a vaccination programme affect IBR?

Vaccination of a herd using a **marker vaccine**, stops or severely limits the spread of disease in a herd while still allowing the detection of IBR-infected cattle. Differentiation between non-marker vaccine antibody and field infection antibody is not possible. Therefore herds vaccinated with **non-marker vaccine** are addressed in the same way as infected herds for the purposes of this protocol and join the programme at Level 2.

How will a herd with proven IBR in the previous 12 months enter Herdsure?

Level 2