



# HiHealth Herdcare Member's Handbook



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# What is HiHealth Herdcare?

HiHealth Herdcare is a CHeCS licenced cattle health scheme designed to help you monitor and eliminate disease from your herd. This will reduce economic losses from sick animals, increase productivity and increase the sale value of breeding animals which can be accredited as 'disease free'.

## How does it work?

A CHeCS cattle health scheme comprises of a set of management rules and a disease testing programme to determine whether disease is present in a herd, enabling farmers to buy and sell animals of known disease status. Guidelines are also provided for the control and elimination of disease from a herd.

HiHealth Herdcare focuses on five diseases:

- BVD
- IBR
- Johne's disease
- Leptospirosis
- Neospora

Your own vet will take the required samples and send them to Biobest with one of our submission forms (available from our website). Each sample can be tested for more than one disease, as required for your herd. The results of any testing you do will be added to your records.

# Reminder Letters

You will receive a reminder letter when your annual test is due. This will explain what testing is to be done for which disease. The use of preprinted labels is strongly recommended. We can produce these if you give us access to your BCMS records.



## What is CHeCS?

The Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHeCS) is an industry led group that sets the rules for accreditation and guidelines for eradicating disease.

CHeCS ensure that standards are maintained across all licensed cattle health schemes and that herd health status in one scheme is equal to that in all the other schemes.



# Which membership level is right for me?

## BVD Only

- BVD testing and control
- Allows farmers to work towards BVD accreditation
- Access member test prices for all BVD testing

## Full

- Eradication, monitoring and accreditation for up to 5 diseases
- Allows farmers to work towards accreditation for BVD and one or more of the other diseases
- Access member test prices for all 5 diseases

**Both types of membership allow access to member prices for sales certificates and advertising of your herd's details on the HiHealth Herdcare website, if you wish.**

## bTB

CHeCS also operates a bovine tuberculosis (bTB) herd accreditation programme. An accreditation score of between 0 and 10 is awarded based on statutory routine surveillance testing. The herd must be part of a CHeCS-licensed Health Scheme and have a health plan covering the control of bTB in place. Score 10 is the best status and is awarded if the herd is Officially TB-Free and there has not been a bTB breakdown within the herd for at least 10 years.

The Technical Standard for the programme is available as a download at: <https://www.checs.co.uk/about-us/downloads/>

Please contact us for further information on HiHealth Herdcare bTB membership. This can be added on to either of the above memberships or signed up to on its own.

# About the diseases

## BVD

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) is a widespread viral disease of cattle which causes significant loss to the industry. Infection results in a variety of problems including abortion, infertility, reduced calf immunity and mucosal disease. Infected herds are likely to be more susceptible to pneumonia and other infectious diseases. The virus is transmitted via nose-to-nose contact and maintained within a herd by animals that are persistently infected (PI) with the virus. A PI is created when a dam is infected during the first third of pregnancy; at this stage the unborn calf's immune system is not fully developed and it cannot fight the virus. After birth, PI animals shed virus for the rest of their lives, acting as a reservoir of infection.

## IBR

Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR) is a highly contagious infectious respiratory disease which is spread via nasal secretions. IBR causes a loss of appetite, high temperature and milk drop and may progress to a fatal pneumonia. Once an animal has been infected the virus is never fully removed and the animal remains a carrier for life. In times of stress – such as movement – the animal may begin to shed the virus again. The purchase of infected animals is the main source of new infections.

## Johne's disease

Johne's disease is caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis* (MAP). The disease targets the intestine wall causing persistent diarrhoea, severe weight loss and infertility, however, infected animals may be culled early for associated illnesses and not progress to such overt clinical signs.

MAP is shed in large quantities in the faeces of infected animals and the calves of infected animals are at greater risk of being infected. Young animals are more susceptible to infection, but the disease has a long incubation period and is not usually detected in animals under 18 months of age.

## Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis in cattle is caused by infection with either of two bacteria called *Leptospira interrogans* serovar Hardjo and *Leptospira borgpetersenii* serovar Hardjo. Infection causes abortion, stillborn or very weak calves, poor fertility and milk drop. The bacteria are present in the reproductive tract and kidneys and shed in the urine, placental material and semen of infected animals. There is also a risk of transmission to humans. Bought-in animals and contaminated water courses pose the biggest risk of infection.

## Neosporosis

Infection with *Neospora caninum* causes abortion in cattle. The disease may present itself on farm as an abortion outbreak or there may be sporadic abortions year after year. An infected animal may show no clinical signs of the disease. The timing of infection during pregnancy will affect the outcome: infection in early pregnancy is usually fatal for the developing foetus; infection at mid-pregnancy may cause foetal death or result in the birth of a persistently infected calf that may show abnormal neurological signs at birth; infection late in the pregnancy is less likely to result in disease of the foetus. The most common way to bring Neospora on to a farm is by buying in persistently infected cattle. As well as transmitting Neospora to their calves, any placental material or dead foetuses from these animals may contain the parasite. If these get eaten by a dog then the dog may become infected and produce oocysts which are the infective stage for cattle.

# Testing required for accreditation

## BVD

The standard herd screen for BVD is a check test where 5–10 unvaccinated home reared animals from each separately managed group in the age range 9–18 months are tested. Two clear check tests on successive calf crops will achieve accreditation.

An alternative to the check test is the calf virus test which can be suitable where the majority of the calves are sold before they reach 9 months of age. All calves born (including any stillborn) are tested for BVD virus using blood or ear tissue samples. Entire calf crops must be tested for 2 years in order to achieve accreditation.

## BVD Vaccinated Monitored Free (VMF)

VMF accreditation can be awarded when the farm does not have a 3-metre boundary between its own and any neighbouring cattle but the entire breeding herd is vaccinated.

## IBR

A herd test must include all animals 12 months of age or older plus any younger animals that are not homebred.

Two clear tests with a minimum interval of 4 weeks and a maximum interval of 12 months will achieve accreditation. It is possible to become accredited for IBR if you vaccinate against it, as long as a marker vaccine has been used. Samples from vaccinated animals are tested on the gE marker ELISA to establish whether there are antibodies to wild-type virus.



## **IBR Vaccinated Monitored Free (VMF)**

IBR VMF accreditation is suitable for herds where there may be contact with neighbouring cattle. At least 95% of the breeding cattle must be vaccinated with marker vaccine.

## **Johne's**

All animals 2 years old and over are tested annually. See page 9 for an explanation of the Johne's risk levels.

## **Leptospirosis**

For a herd test, all animals 2 years old and over plus any females or males between the ages of 1 and 2 years that are intended for breeding must be sampled. Two clear tests with a minimum interval of 6 months and a maximum interval of 12 months will achieve accreditation.

## **Leptospirosis Monitored Free**

LMF status is designed for herds containing vaccinated animals. LMF status is awarded when the number of test positive animals in the herd is 5% or lower with no new positives identified on subsequent tests.

## **Neospora**

All females 2 years of age and over, plus any females between 1 and 2 years intended for breeding and any purchased females, must be sampled, unless there are already results from sampling with the previous 12 months. A risk level is assigned based on the number of positive animals identified, all test positive females in the past 12 months must be taken into account even if they have left before the annual screen date.

## Johne's Risk Levels

**Level 1:** A herd reaches risk level one after having three consecutive clear herd tests at annual intervals. The first one of these cannot be sooner than 12 months after identification of a Johne's disease reactor in the herd.

**Level 2:** Herds with risk level 2 status have had one or two consecutive clear herd tests. The first one of these cannot be sooner than 12 months after identification of a Johne's disease reactor in the herd.

**Level 3:** Herds with risk level 3 status have had test positive animals but the number of reactors is 3% or less of the cattle eligible for Johne's testing. Any reactors identified in the 12 months prior to testing will be relevant when calculating the number of reactors.

**Level 4:** Risk level 4 herds have had more than 3% of eligible animals test positive.

**Level 5:** Herds are given risk level 5 status if they are not adhering to the requirements of the CheCS programme e.g. not testing all eligible animals.

Please note that in order to award the herd a Johne's risk level we must either receive or have confirmation from your vet that you have a Johne's health plan in place.

## Neospora Risk Levels

**Level 1:** Herds must have had three consecutive clear annual screens.

**Level 2:** This applies to all herds that have had an initial or two consecutive clear tests.

**Level 3:** These herds have less than 5% of eligible animals identified as test positive animals at the most recent test.

**Level 4:** These herds have more than 5% of eligible animals identified as test positive animals at the most recent test.

It is recognised that a test positive female of high genetic merit may be retained to breed bulls but as long as such an animal remains on the holding the herd cannot improve from Level 3.

Please note that in order to award the herd a Neospora risk level we must either receive or have confirmation from your vet that you have a Neospora health plan in place.

# How do I maintain accreditation?

## BVD

A check test or calf virus test will need to be completed every year.

## BVD VMF

As above and vaccination of the breeding herd must continue.

## IBR

Once accredited a statistical sample of animals 1 year old and over in each separately managed group within the herd must be tested annually. In addition all breeding bulls, marker vaccinated and non-homebred animals must be tested. See the table on page 11 to work out sample size.

## IBR VMF

All breeding stock and animals that are not homebred and originate from a herd not accredited free of IBR must be tested annually.

## Johne's

All animals 2 years old and over must be tested annually.

# How do I maintain accreditation? continued

## Leptospirosis

Once accredited a statistical sample of animals 1 year old and over in each separately managed group within the herd must be tested annually (again please see the table on page 11). In addition all breeding bulls must be tested

## Leptospirosis MF

All animals 1 year old and over must be tested except for known test positive animals.

## Neospora

All females 2 years of age and over, plus any females between 1 and 2 years intended for breeding and any purchased females, must be tested annually.

## Dairy Herds

Please note that for IBR and Leptospirosis accreditation animals in the milking herd can be monitored through quarterly bulk milk testing rather than individual blood testing.

# Statistical Sample Table

<b>Group Size*</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
10	10
20	19
30	24
40	28
50	31
70	34
100	38
150	40
200	42
300	43
500	45
800	45

\* for values that fall between those in the table use the next highest figure in the table or all the animals in the group, whichever is lower.

# Biosecurity - Added Animals

Ideally added animals from non-accredited herds should be tested on the farm of origin because if unsuitable at that stage it will save the buyer considerable time and expense. Before purchased animals are introduced to the herd they must be quarantined for the appropriate time.

## BVD

Unless added animals have come direct (i.e. not through a sale) from a BVD accredited herd, they must be isolated for 28 days and tested for antibodies to BVD. An animal can only join the main herd when it is deemed not to be either transiently or persistently infected. Any antibody negative animals must be tested for BVD virus to ensure they are not PIs. If an animal is in calf and tests antibody positive then it must remain in isolation until the



Owned by HiHealth Herdcare  
Member - Nicky Hilditch, Bilberry  
Estate LLP (Ruby Devons)

calf is born and this calf must then be tested for BVD virus to ensure it is not a PI. If some of the group test antibody positive and some test antibody negative, the antibody negative animals must remain in isolation for a further 28 days and be retested. If they remain negative they are then free to enter the herd. As they can harbour the virus in their semen after infection, antibody positive bulls should not be used for breeding for a minimum of 9 weeks after possible exposure to virus. Breeding animals entering a Vaccinated Monitored Free herd must be vaccinated against BVD.

# Added Animals - continued

## IBR

Unless added animals have come directly from an IBR accredited herd then they must be isolated for 28 days and tested for antibodies to IBR. If all the animals are negative then the animals can join the main herd. If there are two or more animals in isolation and both negative and positive animals are found, the positive animals must be removed. The negative animals must remain in isolation for a further 28 days and be retested to ensure infection has not spread.

## Neospora

When added animals cannot be obtained from accredited herds they should be blood sampled for antibodies to Neospora. Where possible the dams of prospective purchased heifers should also be sampled. No positive animals may enter the herd.

## Johne's

Unless animals have come from a Johne's risk level 1 herd they must be isolated and tested for Johne's disease by both blood and dung samples irrespective of the age of the animal. Only when results are negative can the animal enter the herd.

## Leptospirosis

Unless added animals have come directly from a leptospirosis accredited herd, then they must be isolated for 28 days and tested for antibodies to leptospirosis. If all the animals are negative, they can join the main herd. If there are two or more animals in isolation and both negative and positive animals are found, the positive animals must be removed. The negative animals must remain in isolation for a further 28 days and be retested to ensure infection has not spread.

## Biosecurity - Show Animals

Animals returning from a show or sale must be treated in the same way as added animals for all diseases with the exception of Johne's. Animals normally require prolonged exposure to Johne's disease before becoming infected. Therefore, testing for Johne's disease is not necessary if the animal has been away from the herd for less than 7 days.



Owned by HiHealth Herdcare Member - Paul Carter, Allendale Farm (Hereford)

## Biosecurity - Boundaries

Good biosecurity is key to preventing the spread of disease. It is recommended for disease control that there is at least a 3-metre gap between health scheme cattle and those of a lower health status. This is essential for those following the IBR and BVD Accredited Free programmes.

There are some additional biosecurity measures that should be taken by those following the Neospora accreditation scheme; dogs and foxes should not be allowed access to still born calves, aborted fetuses or placenta material. These should be removed from the calving area as soon as possible. Steps should also be taken to ensure cattle feed is not contaminated with dog/fox faeces, feed storage areas should be dog proof and dogs should have minimal access to cattle grazing areas.



## Accreditation certificates

Accreditation certificates will automatically be issued to herds when they achieve accreditation. These can be used to show prospective purchasers your cattle health status and they can be useful when taking animals to a show or sale. An Owner's Declaration is also provided which can be copied and completed to accompany animals when sold.

## Sales certificates

Sales certificates can be issued on completion of an Individual Animal Health Status Declaration request (available from our website) and the appropriate testing. If a herd is accredited, depending on the rules of the relevant breed society, individual testing of the animal going to sale may not be required. Individual testing of sale animals must be done within 3 months of the sale to reduce the chance of an animal's status changing by the time it is sold.

## Test results

We maintain full records of the herd's testing and all laboratory reports will be sent directly to the member and their veterinary practice.

Our veterinary team are on hand to discuss your results and to answer any queries you may have.

## Invoicing

All members will be invoiced directly for their testing and benefit from a reduced rate.

# HiHealth Herdcare Team



**Maggie Carson**  
Farm Animal Manager



**Effie Pappa**  
Farm Animal Administrator



**Paul Burr**  
Lab Director



**Susan Duthie**  
Veterinary Manager



**Kate Turner-Haig**  
Veterinary Advisor



**Rebecca Mearns**  
Veterinary Advisor



**Karen Johnson**  
Deputy Cattle Health  
Scheme Manager (Orkney)

## Website

The HiHealth Herdcare website provides further information on the scheme.

- Up-to-date submission forms can be downloaded.
- Members' database: This contains information about accredited herds and contact details for the relevant farms. Information will only appear on the database if a member has agreed to have their herd's details publicised.
- Members' Adverts: Members can advertise any stock they have for sale on our website.
- Links: If you have a herd website a link to this can be displayed on our website. We also have links to a number of breed societies and other websites that may be of interest.

## Social Media



@HiHealthHerdcare



@HHHerdcare

## Notes

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## Contact Us

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