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TWO THIRDS OF SHEEP AND DEER FLOCK INFECTED BY JOHNE'S

Radio New Zealand

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Research into the prevalence of Johne's disease in New Zealand has found infection in two thirds of sheep flocks and deer herds.

The research from the Johne's Disease Research Consortium also found about a third of cattle herds are infected with the bacterial disease.

Johne's disease causes an immune reaction that can ultimately kill animals by impairing the absorption of nutrients. It is believed to reduce production by up to \$88 million per year.

The Johne's Disease Research Consortium was formed in 2007 to help farmers manage the costly effects of the disease and is designed to run for five years.

Chair Graeme Milne says the first part of the project was to work out the prevalence of the disease.

Research will now focus on what farmers can do to tackle the bacterial disease.

Mr. Milne says they are also considering whether there will be sufficient information after five years and the consortium may look to extend the research by another two to five years.