



Improving vaccination practices against leptospirosis

THE LINK BETWEEN animals, humans and the environment poses significant challenges, including New Zealand's most common zoonotic disease, leptospirosis. The NZVA is part of the Farmer Leptospirosis Action Group (FLAG), which is undertaking a nationwide survey to improve vaccination practices against

leptospirosis in dairy herds. The results of a Massey University pilot study in 2010-11 raised concerns about the effectiveness of vaccination programmes on the farms assessed, and the present study seeks to gain more insights and more definitive information. Randomly selected dairy farmers throughout the country

will be participating and farmers will be surveyed about vaccination practices. "This research will help us to update best practice guidelines for farmers, veterinarians and industry," says Professor Cord Heuer, from Massey University's Institute of Veterinary, Animal and Biomedical Sciences. "We are focused on reducing the risk of leptospirosis infection in animals and the people who work on farms and in the wider dairy industry." Sampling began in early January 2016 and targets 200 dairy herds across all regions, stratified by the number of lactating cows per herd. Twenty cows per herd will be randomly selected for blood and urine samples by each farm's veterinarian and a bulk milk sample will also be collected. @