



Health planning for profit

Make some time for a health check and see if your herd – and business – could benefit

Herd health is firmly on the agenda at this year's Dairy Event and Livestock Show and with such a diverse range of topics there should be some valuable take-home messages for every herd. Attend one of the practical demonstrations and see if you can pick up some helpful tips.

With health problems and veterinary costs adding further unwanted pressure on herds already squeezed by rising input costs, the introduction of the Farm Health Planning exhibition at this year's Dairy Event and Livestock Show should help to provide some timely relief for many visitors. A combination of practical demonstrations and technical information will be provided by some of the UK's leading vets and advisors on proactive herd and flock health management and disease prevention measures. These will all

support the exhibits theme of 'Healthy Animals, Healthy Profits' that is designed to encourage producers to proactively manage disease, improve their livestock's overall performance and ultimately, increase their unit's sustainability. Key issues that will be put under the microscope include lameness, mastitis, fertility, young stock health, purchased stock issues and profitable disease control.

Proactive approach

Farm Health Planning (FHP) will be staged

Health 'hazards' posed by purchased stock

National Milk Laboratories (NML) is one of the major sponsors in the new Farm Health Planning exhibition. As part of this exhibition, which will focus on healthy animals healthy profits, NML has teamed up with leading dairy vet Peter Orpin from the Leicestershire-based Park Vet Group. The joint demonstration will look at purchased stock health issues.

Too many cows are purchased on a whim from what looks like healthy cows," says Mr Orpin. "There are better ways to manage purchases. Hard evidence is required with routine test results from recognised sources before producers should entertain taking stock from another herd. And they should seek assurance that on farm control measures have been adhered to."

The risks of 'importing' diseases into a herd from purchased stock will be demonstrated in a presentation from NML's Ben Bartlett and Peter

Orpin (see table on the next page). "We will highlight how quickly and how extensively diseases can spread within the herd when infected stock is introduced," adds Mr Bartlett. "And the cost implications of not adhering to a biosecurity programme.

The presentation aims to help producers follow biosecurity rules and understand the importance of knowing the health status of their own stock, as well as the health status of the purchased stock using sound veterinary advice. Purchased cows should 'fit' the herd's health status.

"If you bought a car for £2,000 you would at least look under the bonnet and have it checked over," adds Mr Orpin. "So why don't we do this for cows?"

"Buying cows is a risky business but if you manage these risks properly you can still expand your herd, reduce these risks and keep the herd healthy.



Foot trimming demonstrations always attract a substantial crowd at the Dairy Event

animals," says FHP project co-ordinator, John Sumner. "Previously, producers produced health plans that have usually amounted to an exercise of ticking the right boxes to meet certain industry assurance scheme requirements. That's where FHP differs; it calls for a proactive approach whereby the farmer, the vet and the consultant work together in partnership and discuss the various issues before decisions are made."

Practical perspective

FHP corporate sponsor, Waitrose's agriculture manager, Duncan Sinclair comments: "Prevention is better than cure may be an old adage but it is as relevant as ever in today's economic climate. The participants in the exhibition are offering an interesting and practical perspective through the wide range of demonstrations that will empower producers to go away from the event to put them into action on their own farms, and subsequently achieve cost benefits."

Rachael Porter

in a purpose-built exhibition hall with tiered seating and a giant plasma screen onto which the demonstrations will be projected throughout the two-day event. The exhibition has attracted support from a wide range of industry sponsors including: Cattle Information Service; Defra; BoehringerIngelheim Vetmedica; Forum Products; Giltspur Scientific; Richard Keenan; Janessen Animal Health; National Milk Laboratories; Volac; and Waitrose.

"The FHP initiative involves understanding how much disease costs the business each year, developing a health plan with the producer's vet or advisor, regularly reviewing the plan's progress and ensuring bought in animals do not pose a disease risk to existing

The Farm Health Planning exhibition programme

subject area	time	speaker	sponsor
Foot trimming	10.00	Karla Hedley, Steve Bradbury (Norman Walker, Thurs)	Giltspur Scientific
Mastitis	10.40	Andy Biggs MRCVS, The Vale Vet Group, Tiverton Ian Ohnstad, The Dairy Group	Boehringer Ingelheim, Vetmedica
Nutritional influences on fertility	11.20	Alastair Hayton MRCVS, Kingfisher Vet Group, Crewkerne Martin Kavanagh MVB, Keenan Group veterinary director	Richard Keenan
Purchased stock health issues	12.00	Peter Orpin MRCVS, The Park Vet Group, Whetstone, Leicester Ben Bartlett, NML director	NMR, National Milk Laboratories
Young stock health	12.40	Keith Cutler MRCVS, Endell Vet Group, Salisbury	Volac
Foot trimming	13.20	Karla Hedley, Norman Walker (Steven Bradbury, Thurs)	Giltspur Scientific
Profitable health management	14.00	Andrew Taylor MRCVS, Livestock Export Solutions	CIS
Lameness	14.40	Roger Blowey FRCVS, Wood Vet Group, Gloucester Matt Dobbs BVM&S, Westpoint Veterinary Group,	Forum Products
Responsible control of internal sheep parasites	15.20	Lesley Stubbings, SCOPS Richard Sygall MRCVS, technical adviser, Janssen Animal Health	Janssen Animal Health
Foot trimming	16.00	Karla Hedley, Steve Bradbury, Norman Walker	Giltspur Scientific