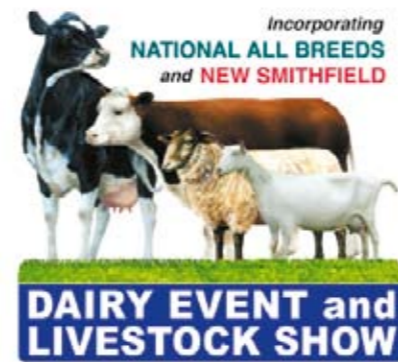


Just some of the 'must-see' products and services being launched at this year's show

# Get with the programme

Health and fertility are important issues for producers, playing a key role in herd and business success. And they're set to be major features once again at the Dairy Event and Livestock Show. We highlight some of the 'not-to-be-missed' features and new products that are set to make their debut at the NEC in Birmingham.

text **Rachael Porter**



## Adding value to activity monitors

Genus ABS is launching an insemination service specifically tailored for producers who use activity monitors to aid heat detection. AI Plus provides a complimentary breeding service to producers looking to maximise pregnancy production in herds with activity monitors.

"While activity monitors are an aid to heat detection, they can have significant drawbacks," says Genus' Richard Williams. "Activity monitors use changes in a cow's behaviour as an indicator of heat. However, research shows that activity monitors often incorrectly flag cows for service leading to missed opportunities to breed and to cows being bred which are not in heat, often because they are already pregnant. Both represent a financial loss."

Under the AI Plus service, the producer calls a Genus ABS technician when the activity monitor identifies cows may be due for service. The technician visits the farm and, using individual animal examination, will decide if cows should be bred or not. Decisions not to breed will ensure that cows that showed increased activity but are not actually in heat are not served. Semen is only thawed once cows have been identified as genuinely due for service.

"This service will maximise the benefit of producers' investment in activity monitors by ensuring that only cows due for service are actually served. And by using a skilled technician it will be possible to ensure higher conception rates, which will lead to more pregnancies," adds Mr Williams.



## Farm Health Planning 'partnerships'

It's all about team work in this year's Farm Health Planning (FHP) seminars. Milk fever, fertility, lameness, Johne's disease, mastitis and BVD will all be put under the spotlight by the Cattle Health and Welfare Group. Presentations will be made by producer:vet partnerships and discussions will be chaired by British Cattle Veterinary Association members.

The seminars will be staged in an open area with visitor seating, enclosed by glass panels and located in the Animal Health Zone. A dairy producer will introduce each seminar and, with his vet, explain how they are working together to solve a particular challenge. Visitors will be encouraged to participate in the sessions by using voting keypads.

"We're taking a completely new approach to the FHP seminars, which are returning to the event for the fourth consecutive year," explains FHP co-ordinator Brian Lindsay.

"Each will examine one of the challenging health issues experienced by virtually every dairy or beef herd, and how they have been addressed by individual producers working in partnership with their vet. "The opportunity to hear first hand

from both producers and their vets about how they are meeting these challenges head on, using a team approach to implement strategies for the farm's unique circumstances will, I am sure, provide plenty of valuable food for thought."



Table 1: The Farm Health Planning seminars (Stand AH-167)

sponsor	title	speakers vet	farmer
Boehringer-Ingelheim	A cool, calm and co-ordinated approach to milk fever	Richard Cooper	Ollie and Ed Partridge
The Cattle Inf. Service (CIS) and Holstein UK	Dairy cow fertility, more important now than ever before	Jon Mouncey, Westpoint Veterinary Group	Tim Gue, Huddlestone Farmers
DairyCo	Lameness, no more lame excuses; use what's available to get it right	John Reader	Neil Baker
NML	Johne's, reaping the benefits of effective control	Dick Sibley and Peter Orpin	
QMMS and Sum-It Computers Ltd	Mastitis, the holistic approach to targeted management	James Breen	Rob Clapp
Novartis	BVD – testing times	Paul Burr MRCVS	Bob Mitchell, Drumdreel Farm

## Unique calf electrolyte



And once those cows calve, the focus swings to calf health. If scours are an issue on your unit, then a calf electrolyte will be launched at the show that could be of interest. First Thirst is a unique calf electrolyte, based on proven science and backed up by trials and use on farms, according to Preston-based animal health company G Shepherd.

Formulated by Professor Jon Naylor, an expert on calf diarrhoea, dehydration and acid-base balance, it is a dry powder that is packaged in individual sachets. It contains a pre-biotic that increases good protective bacteria and prevents bacteria travelling across the gut wall. And it's unique in that it can be used with milk in mild or moderate diarrhoea.

"It is also potent enough to be used in severe cases alone, when milk is withdrawn for 36 hours," says Graham Shepherd.

The pre-biotic used is a Galacto-Oligosaccharide (GOS), which is a milk-derived chain of sugars, resistant to mammalian digestive enzymes.

"So it acts in the intestines to increase the calf's own good protective bacteria (Lactobacilli and Bifidobacter) and prevents pathogenic bacteria, such as Salmonella and Campylobacter, travelling across the gut wall and into the tissues," he adds.

"It is much more effective than pro-biotic bacteria, and much more stable in storage and manufacture."

Milk does not need to be withheld in mild and moderate cases due to the alkalising agent in the product. This is mainly acetate, rather than bicarbonate.

The latter neutralises acid in the abomasums, preventing the vital clotting and allowing further pathogens past the gastric acid barrier.

But acetate does not have these issues. Acetate only neutralises acid after it is absorbed, acting within cells and not the abomasum. Visit G Shepherd at stand number AH-207 to find out more.



## No more 'lame' excuses

For those battling with lameness – or looking to tackle it head on before it becomes a serious problem in their herd – DairyCo has some good news. It will be launching a programme that's designed to tackle lameness literally one step at a time. The Healthy Feet Programme aims to help producers to reduce incidence of lameness on a more permanent basis.

What's more, it will also be giving producers who visit the stand a Healthy

Feet 'goody bag' to help them get started.

"Lameness can cost an average of £180 per case," says DairyCo product manager Kate Cross. "But despite the cost, and the fact that none of us likes to see a lame cow, there has been an absence of a structured approach to lameness reduction in recent years."

The programme has been developed using some of the most up-to-date research on mobility and lameness,



including the recent Tubney Charitable Trust-funded report. Taking the learning from the DairyCo Mastitis Control Plan and the Healthy Feet Project at Bristol, the programme gives producers the opportunity to work with a trained mentor to develop a bespoke plan that will help get lameness under control on a more permanent basis.

"There's much more to it than knowing when to footbath and hoof trim," says Kate. "Working with a mentor to identify and tackle the causes of lameness means you'll have the support you need to get you and your staff using the right approach to get on top of the problem and make sure you stay there."

"Producers can address mobility challenges using the tools and publications we've produced, alongside the established mobility scoring aids," says Kate. "Using our new lesion recognition card to identify and then record lesions, as well as regular mobility scoring will help producers to build a picture of mobility issues on their farm."

"This is an important part of the programme as it gives you the background work, but it's working with the mentor that will really benefit you and help to reduce incidence of lameness in the long term."

Find out more and collect your goody bag from stand number H-203.

