



Make your day pay

A taste of what's to come at this year's Dairy Event and Livestock Show

Live demonstrations, free analyses and a wealth of practical advice.

Just a few reasons to take a trip to Stoneleigh this month. We highlight just a few of the launches and features that could be key to helping you to boost the productivity and profitability of your dairy business.

The slurry centre will join the popular soil surgery and silage clinics offering timely advice to producers visiting this year's Dairy Event and Livestock Show. All three features will be staged in the Forage for Livestock Exhibition, along with other exhibits each offering producers advice on how to make more efficient use of their home grown forages.

Producers are invited to bring along to the new slurry centre a sample of either manure or slurry for free testing. These will be analysed using NIRS (Near Infrared Reflectance Spectroscopy) to provide a report including total N, available N and

phosphate. And ADAS slurry and manure specialists will be available to interpret the results and to discuss with producers how to make the best use of manures and slurries on their farm.

Soil surgery

The popular soil surgery will once again be examining samples of established sward, including turf layer. Independent dairy specialists, Kingshay Farming Trust and agricultural nutritionist Jo Scamell will be on hand to assess soil status – free of charge – and to offer advice on how to improve soil structure. The silage clinic, sponsored by Sciantech,

Feeding+ launch events

The 11 feeding+ launch events will be held across Britain this autumn. Producers will be mailed with information about their nearest event and the launch meetings will have four workstations that will look at technical



aspects of dairy cow feeding, from clamp face management to rumen pH, and will provide producers with some money saving tips.

date	place
September 23	Meikle Camoquhill Farm, Balfon, Glasgow
September 24	Peastree Farm, Durbar, Carlisle
September 25	Venue TBC, Lancashire
October 2	Washfold Farm, Leyburn, North Yorkshire
October 8	Spond Farm, Alton, Staffordshire
October 14	Trenithon Chancellor, Probus, Truro, Cornwall
October 15	Lye Cross Farm, Redhill, North Somerset
October 22	Kings Worthy, Winchester, Hampshire
October 28	Oakey Farm, Moreton Valence, Gloucester
October 29	Wood Park Farm (Liverpool University), Chester High Road, Neston, Wirral
October 30	Pelcomb Farm, Pelcomb Bridge, Haverford West, Pembrokeshire



The popular soil surgery at the Dairy Event

will analyse samples of either clamp, big bale, maize silage or hay, again free of charge. Turn around time is two hours and a panel of silage experts will be available to discuss the results and offer advice.

Producers need to 'book in' ahead of the event by ordering a ticket on 0845 458 2711 or on line www.dairyevent.co.uk. They will then get sampling instructions.

Volac will be staging the 'Volac Fat Clinic', which aims to help producers identify the most appropriate protected fat product for their production system and what factors may alter this choice during lactation, at this year's event. And producers are being urged to bring details of their herd's current ration and milk payment structure to enhance individual discussions.

"Cows are subject to a number of nutritional changes throughout lactation," says the company's Richard Kirkland. "Spring turn out, fluctuating forage quality and moving to winter diets will all impact on herd performance.

"Producers may also be faced with changes. Moving to a new milk buyer, changes in milk constituent payments or, for some, a strong incentive to increase milk production this season, can all affect how the cow is fed.

"Different protected fat products are available and the Fat Clinic is designed to help producers identify when they should use particular products to ensure their herd's potential is reached, cost-effectively."

Advisors will be available throughout the two-day event to discuss the options, assess economically which type of fat would best fit each individual milk contract and recommend nutritional solutions to help producers realise higher rewards this season.

Feeding campaign

Producers have the opportunity to sign up to DairyCo's innovative new feeding campaign at this year's event. Recent DairyCo research showed a marked difference in feeding costs between the most and least efficient producers and highlighted that many herds could make significant savings – up to 2ppl – through more efficient feeding and nutrition.

The feeding+ campaign, devised by four highly respected nutrition specialists, covers all aspects of feeding and nutrition and will be the focus of the stand in Exhibition Hall 3.

The programme, which is a combination of farm events, workshops and take-home resources, is also being launched to producers across the country at 11 special meetings (see box).

"Feed and forage costs emerged as one of the main areas of difference in total costs between lowest cost producers and the rest," says DairyCo's senior economist

Kay Carson. "We expect that many producers could increase their margins by 2ppl through more efficient feeding and nutrition at current prices. And this was one of the main drivers for taking a comprehensive look at the whole area of feed efficiency and putting the feeding+ programme together."

In many cases feed efficiency can be improved by making changes to cow management and for most producers it is not a case of changing their whole system, but doing what they are doing better. It is important to remember that feed efficiency isn't just about cutting costs. It can be about increasing the yield from that cost, and making more money."

Improving profitability

"With studies showing feed as by far the largest dairy herd cost, this area can offer the greatest potential for improving profitability. And given the sheer cost of feed, only a small change can make a big difference," says extension officer Adam Clay. "It's all about maximising your potential from feeding. For example, your feeding system can have a significant effect on feed conversion efficiency. Moving from 1.2litres/kg DM to 1.3litres/kg DM can increase an 8,000 litre yielding cow by 8.5%."

Another benefit of improving your feed system is that you can often see the financial effects of changes in a relatively short time," adds Mr Clay. "These changes can also have an effect on labour requirements, machinery and other overhead costs as well as herd health and fertility."

He says that labour is also a crucial consideration in achieving the most cost effective feeding system. "As a rule of thumb, for a 200-cow herd averaging 7,000 litres per cow a saving of just one hour a day in feeding times can be worth 0.25ppl."

Rachael Porter