

A round up of the award winners at this year's Livestock Event

Winners' enclosure

We showcase the cream of the British dairy industry crop who were recognised for their hard work, dedication, talent and innovation during July's two-day event. Read one to find out more about, among others, this year's NMR/RABDF Gold Cup winner and the Prince Philip Award

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Shropshire family's golden reward



The Higgins family from Wilderley Hall, in Pulverbatch near Shrewsbury, has been crowned this year's winner of the NMR/RABDF Gold Cup. A family business in every sense of the word, brothers Andrew and Bill, supported by parents Bill and Margaret, manage the 316 cows and 266 followers that make up the pedigree Holstein Wilderley herd.

The family has increased cow numbers and performance on its 145-hectare unit during the past 15 years through breeding top quality replacements. Cows have been bred consistently for production with good functional type. The family's aim remains to breed a uniform herd of top cows. Calving is year round with a calving interval for the qualifying year of 433 days and milk is sold via Muller/Wiseman to Tesco. The level production pattern suits the business' management and milk buyer. In the year to September 2012, this three-times-a-day milked herd achieved

12,718kg of milk at 3.81% fat and 3.03% protein. Average cell count was 68,000cells/ml.

A team of three full-time staff and five part-time milkers are part of the Wilderley Hall team. They are an asset that the family fully appreciate and admit that the high level of stockmanship shown by the team is integral to the success of the herd.

Presenting the award at the Livestock Event, RABDF chairman and chairman of the Gold Cup judges Ian Macalpine described this herd as a shining example of attention to detail right through the dairy business. "Every aspect, from calf rearing through to the milking herd's routines, is managed with great care and to an exceptional standard. This herd is well bred and well cared for and, as a result, it is performing to a very high level, which is reflected in its production data and its overall lifetime daily yield."

Bill Higgins (centre) with sons Bill (left) and Andrew (right), and RABDF president David Leaver (far left) and NMR chairman Philip Kirkham (far right)



Silver celebrations for Lancashire herd



The 2013 NMR Silver Salver winners are James and David Tomlinson

Runner up and recipients of the NMR Silver Salver were David, Sheila and James Tomlinson. Together they manage the 230-cow Bilsrow Holstein herd from Bilsborrow in Preston, Lancashire. Responsibilities are shared on this 154-hectare unit. James Tomlinson takes care of milking, fertility and health with the help of assistant herdsman James Billington. His father David – with part time help from Russell Thompson – looks after the land work and feeding. Breeding decisions are based on a

balance of type and production and have always underpinned the progress and success of this herd, which achieved an average yield of 10,538kg of milk at 4.41% fat and 3.14% protein on twice-a-day milking with an average cell count of 118,000 cells/ml for the year ending September 2012. Milk is sold to local cheese makers Dewlay at Garstang. With cow numbers now at 230 and 210 youngstock and more land recently acquired the Tomlinsons are set for expansion.

Highest LDY herd

Winner of the Chris May Memorial Award, given to the Gold Cup qualifying herd with the highest average lifetime daily yield (LDY), was Nick Cobb from Dorchester, Dorset. His 731-cow herd achieved an average LDY of 19.47kg/day for the year ending September 2012 and has a calving interval of 383 days.

Alan Cobb (second from right) with herdsman Paul Crocker, RABDF president David Leaver (far left) and NMR chairman Philip Kirkham (far right)



Breed society awards



Ayrshire Cattle Society president Colin Christophers (left) and John Adamson

Also presented at the Livestock Event was the Lilyhill Cup for the top Jersey herd and the Murchland Cup for the top Ayrshire herd among this year's 500 Gold Cup qualifying herds. Winner of the Lilyhill Cup, awarded by the Jersey Cattle Society, is Swangrove Farms from Badminton, Gloucestershire. This 107-cow herd achieved a yield of 6,486kg of milk at 5.23% of fat and 3.72% protein with a cell count of 153,000 cells/ml. The Murchland Perpetual Trophy, awarded by the Ayrshire Cattle Society, went to John Adamson & Son from Pettinain, Lanarkshire. Their 157-cow herd saw an average yield of 8,254kg of milk at 4.33% fat and 3.31% protein.

From left to right: President of the Jersey Cattle Society Tom Bradley, NMR milk recorder Myra Chappell, NMR field business manager Jane McGill, and RABDF president David Leaver



By Royal appointment

The 2013 Prince Philip Award has been presented to Milkrite in recognition of the company's continued research, development and innovation and the introduction of the IP20-AIR milking machine liner, all of which aim to bring health and productivity benefits to dairy cattle.

Widely recognised around the world for its innovative approach to milking machine and liner design, Milkrite's IP20-AIR has been designed with high yielding herds in mind. It features a narrow bore which helps reduce liner slip, increase milking speed and helps deliver a more gentle ACR removal. Combined, these lead to less ringing on the teats, a lower



Company success: the Milkrite team is presented with the 2013 Prince Philip Award

incidence of hyperkeratosis and, as a result, a reduction in mastitis and improvement in somatic cell counts.

The Prince Philip Award is presented for the most practical, relevant and best-presented technical demonstration or

exhibit at the Livestock Event. The award commemorates the Duke's Presidency of the RABDF from 1973 to 1975 and is presented annually at the Livestock Event. Winners receive their award at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

Recognition for top health management students

Charlotte Torrance, an FdSc Agriculture student at Plumpton College, and Gregory Steele, a student studying at Cambridge University Veterinary School, have each received the RABDF Farm Health Management Award, sponsored by Volac. This is an awareness raising initiative for younger members of the industry and the two winners were each awarded a £500 cash prize during a presentation at the Livestock Event.

A certificate was presented to the two other finalists short-listed for the award: Victoria Kirby, an Extended Diploma in Agriculture student at Myerscough College, and David McFarland, who is studying at Glasgow Vet School.

The annual award, which was open to agriculture and veterinary students, required them to write a 1,500-word essay on proactive farm health management and the benefits it brings to animal



RABDF president David Leaver (left) with Volac's David Neville (far right) with David McFarland, Victoria Kirby, Charlotte Torrance and Paul Wood (on behalf of Gregory Steele)

health and welfare and farm business profitability. They were asked to demonstrate an understanding of the environmental effects of disease and its likely impact on meat and milk quality, comment on the overall progress of the national health planning and

management initiative and discuss the differences among the various livestock sectors and how one can learn from another.

The essays were judged by the RABDF's Derrick Davies, vet Andrew Praill, and consultant John Sumner.

Pasteuriser scoops innovation award



The Milkworks Gold colostrum pasteuriser, from Lancashire-based company G Shepherd Animal Health, was presented with the RABDF Livestock Machinery and Equipment Award, which is made to the product that delivers the most economic value to the livestock sector.

RABDF president David Leaver (left) with Chris and Graham Shepherd (centre) and RABDF council member Angus Wielkopolski

The entry was a clear winner, according to RABDF council member Angus Wielkopolski, who was chairman of the three-strong judging team. "We were impressed by the simple-to-use system, which has the potential to deliver much improved calf health. The machine also incorporates defrosting and cooling settings and uses disposable bags, which maximises the hygiene for each calf while minimising the amount of labour required."