

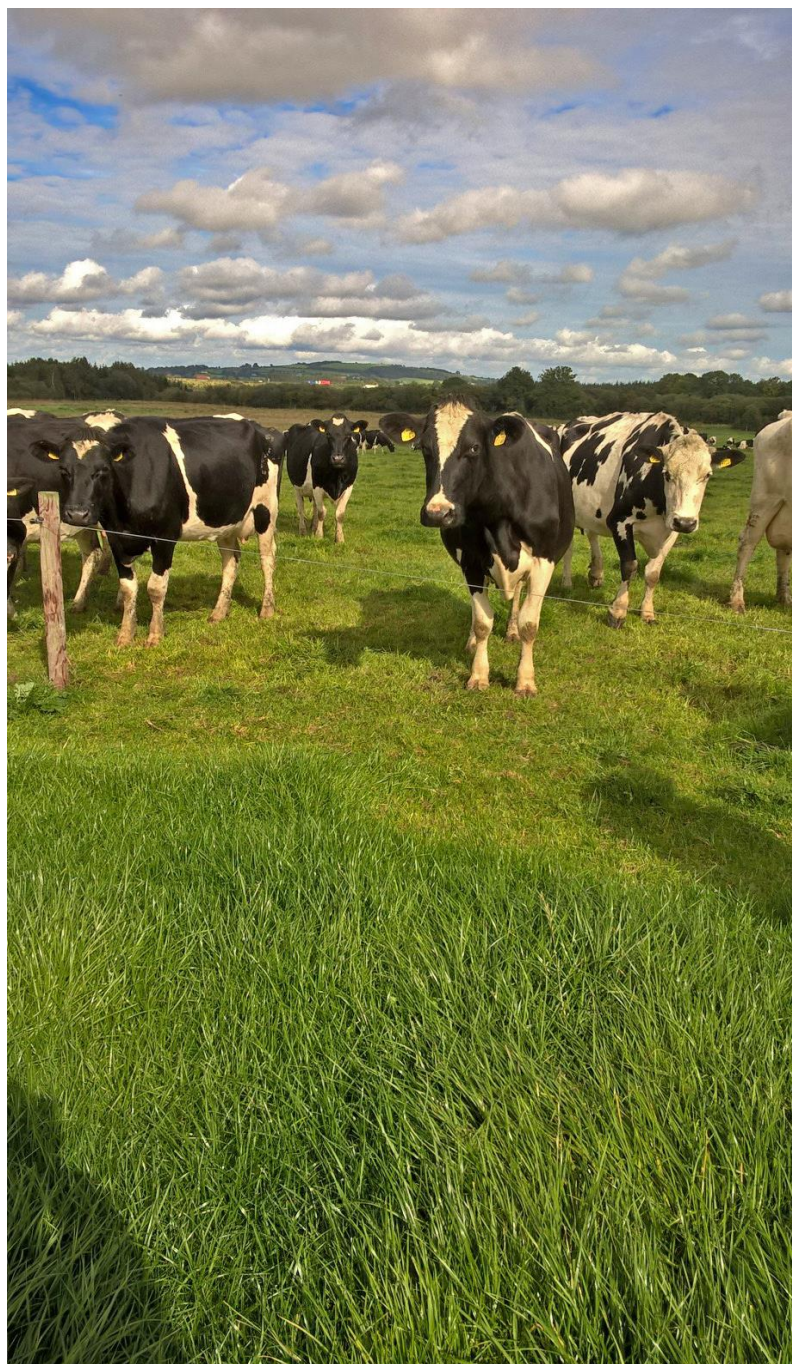
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Milk Manager NEWS



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Lorna MacPherson	



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Market Update

UK Wholesale Dairy Commodity Market

- Fonterra's recent online GDT auction (1st August 2017) showed another drop of 1.6% in the weighted average price across all products, reaching US \$3,343/t, indicating a weakening of global dairy prices. Only butter milk powder and whole milk powder showed positive movements (+0.4% and +1.3% respectively). Despite butter continuing to increase in value in the UK throughout July, the GDT auction for butter resulted in a 4.9% fall to \$5,747/t. Cheddar also dropped 4.8% to \$3,943/t.

Commodity	July 2017 £/T	June 2017 £/T	% Difference Monthly	July 2016 £/T	% Diff 2016- 2017
Bulk Cream	2,500	2,370	+5	1,370	+82
Butter	5,420	5,100	+6	2,850	+90
SMP	1,570	1,700	-8	1,500	+5

Source: AHDB Dairy - based on trade agreed from 1st-27th July 2017.
Note these are average prices indicating prices traded across the whole of the past month.

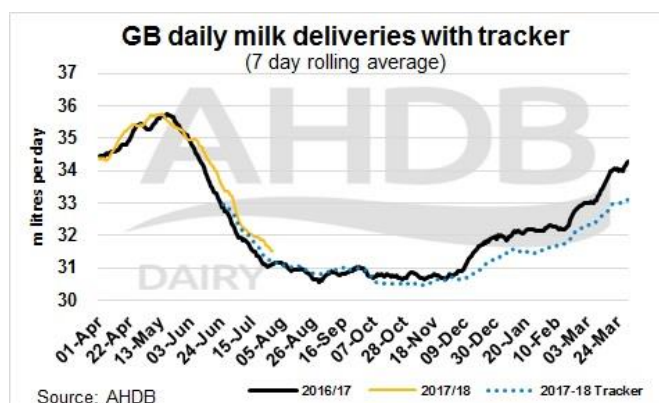
- SMP prices fell back in July to an average of £1,570/t. The biggest influence on the price was due to the exchange rate (Sterling has been weaker against the Euro for the 3rd consecutive month). At the end of July SMP was roughly €50/t above intervention level.
- The cream market in July has been volatile, ranging from £2,420 to £2,600/t. As a result the estimated cream income to a liquid processor increased to 14.61ppl in June, which is 6.62ppl higher compared to July 2016. While the wholesale value of cream has risen three-fold since April 2016, the pence per % has only risen 50% at the farm-gate.
- Butter continues to increase in price but the rate is slowing, with a rise of just 6% to £5,420/t in July compared to a 15% increase from April to May and 19% from May to June. The slower rise in May was attributed to the exchange rate and quieter trade throughout the holiday season. Consequently, AMPE increased by 0.3ppl for July.
- MCVE increased by only 1% for July. While mild cheddar prices rose £50/t and whey butter by 7%, whey powder prices fell by 9%.

	July 2017	June 2017	12 months previously	Net Amount less 2ppl Haulage – JUL 17
AMPE	36.7ppl	36.4ppl	23.4ppl	34.7ppl
MCVE	37.1ppl	36.9ppl	23.5ppl	35.1ppl

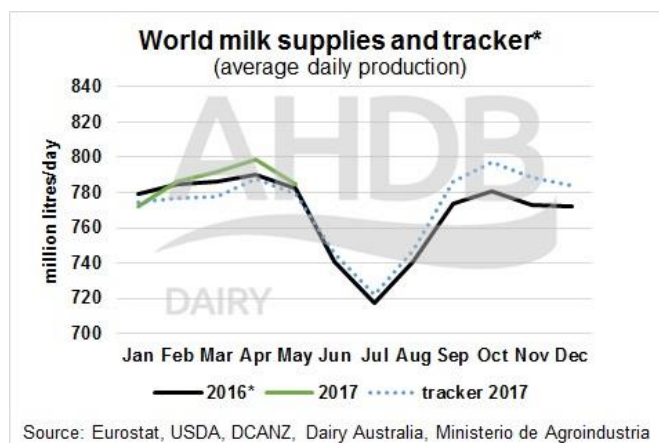
Source: AHDB Dairy

UK Milk Deliveries and Global Production

- Despite UK milk deliveries falling by 1% week-on-week (up to week ending 29th July), production is still above the same week last year by 1.3% (equivalent to 400,000 litres/day).



- Over 65% of global milk production comes from the EU-28, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand and the US. These five key exporting regions account for 80% of global exports of dairy products and are greatly influential on the direction of price movements on global markets.



- Global supply is on the increase with the USA at +2%, New Zealand down by 0.7% in May and the EU at +0.1% in April. The combined milk output from these key areas was up 1.3% in April and is estimated to be +0.9% in May. Supply is thought to grow by around 1% in the

summer but demand will continue due to rising global GDP of 3.5%.

- According to a report by the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), India is expected to be the world's largest milk producer by 2026. Its output is predicted to be one-third greater than that of the EU, the world's second largest producer. India is also projected to be the world's most populous country by 2026, overtaking China, and will have the biggest increase in global wheat production.

Monthly Price Movements for August 2017

- Milk price rises are coming thick and fast with further increases expected for September. The DEFRA average farm-gate price was 26.75ppl in June, which was a 0.3ppl decrease from May but 6.18ppl higher than June 2016. It is estimated to be 30ppl by Christmas and could be heading towards 33ppl by spring 2018.

Commodity Produced	Company Contract	Price Change	Standard Litre Price for August 2017
Liquid & Cheese	Arla Farmers UK	+0.81ppl	28.82ppl Liquid, 29.98ppl Manufacture
Liquid & Cheese	Arla Direct	+1ppl liquid +1.04ppl manufacture	27ppl Liquid, 28.08ppl Manufacture
Liquid & Brokered Milk	First Milk Mainland Scotland	A price +0.9ppl. B price no change	26.39ppl A price 25ppl B price
Cheese	Fresh Milk Company (Lactalis)	No change	27.5ppl
Liquid & Manufacture	Grahams	+1.5ppl	27.75ppl
Liquid & Manufacture	Muller non-aligned	+1.5ppl	27.69 ppl
Liquid & Manufacture	Muller (Co-op)	+0.5ppl	28.41ppl
Liquid & Manufacture	Muller (Tesco)	+0.21ppl	29.58ppl
Liquid, Powder & Brokered	Yew Tree Dairies	+1.5ppl	29.0ppl Standard A litre price

- Yew Tree's 1.5ppl increase is the first milk price change for them since February 2017 and now puts them at the top of the tree for the UK's highest non-aligned standard litre price.

- There is a significant change to First Milk's pricing structure as of September 2017. A and B pricing is being abolished so that producers will be paid a single rate specific to their milk pool (and depending on milk composition, hygiene quality, volume and production profile). Where applicable, the individual transport charge will be removed. A production bonus will also be applied. If a farm's production is equal to or exceeds the volume produced in the same month in the previous year, a 0.5ppl bonus will be applied on all litres produced. This new pricing mechanism will encourage more milk production at a time when there is no surplus milk and the B price for July was only 25ppl.

- Muller is offering another increase of 1.31ppl to its non-aligned suppliers from the 1st September, bringing its standard litre price to 29.0ppl. It is likely that as of September the monthly retail supplement will disappear. Non-aligned suppliers will then come under the banner of Muller Direct Farmers and with this comes the following new initiatives:

- Muller Direct Futures Contract, where producers can agree a monthly price for up to 25% of their milk volume for the following 12 months.
- Muller Farm Insight, which is a new service being brought out this Autumn to provide farmers with welfare and benchmarking tools, as well as valuable data to help improve their business.

- Despite the recent downturn and 33 dairy farmers exiting the industry in the first half of 2017, dairy cattle numbers in Scotland are the highest for 20 years, according to the Scottish Dairy Cattle Association. Whilst the number of dairy herds has fallen to its lowest level since 1903, at 924, cow numbers have increased by 2,622 to 175,928 and the average herd size has increased to 191, the highest ever. The heaviest populated dairying areas are Ayrshire, with 220 farms and 34,440 milking cows, followed by Dumfriesshire with 154 herds and 32,185 milking cows.

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Straights Update

Straights prices for delivery in artic loads as of early August are as follows (varies depending on location):

£/T for 29t loads delivery + £7/t haulage	Aug 17	Sep/Oct 17	Nov 17 - Apr 18	May 18 Sep 18
Proteins				
Hipro Soya	281	282	289	295
Rapeseed Meal	166	169	184	-
EU Wheat Distillers	172	173	173	175
Starch				
Wheat	149	149	152	May-Jul 157 Aug-Sep 152
Barley	123	125	129	May-Jul 134 Aug-Sep 129
Maize	175	179	Asa163	-
Fibre				
Sugar Beet Pulp – imported	182	183	148	-
Soya Hulls	134	134	134	137

Source: Straights Direct on 7th August. Barley and wheat prices are based on delivery to central belt. For North-East, deduct £5/t for wheat. Courtesy of Julian Bell, Senior Rural Business Consultant, SAC Consulting. Prices do not include seller's margin.

Global News

- Soyabean meal prices in the US are easing after reports of cooler weather and showers in early August. Bean crop ratings have also improved (by 2% for good-excellent ratings) for the first time in 7 weeks. Prospects for the US soyabean crop are variable, with crops in central and eastern areas in much better condition than the western Midwest. As of 30th July, 59% of the US crop was rated good-excellent, which is 13 percentage points lower than last year. Yield is greatly influenced by the "setting pod" phase, which mostly takes place in August. Weather conditions will be critical this month in determining yield and the outcome can significantly influence global oilseed prices, as soyabeans account for 60% of global oilseed output.
- The US spring wheat crop has been affected by hot dry conditions this summer, with only 31% of the crop rated good-excellent on 31st July, the lowest for that week since 1989. The Canadian spring wheat crop is also a concern. Saskatchewan (Canada's largest wheat

producing state), saw further downgrades with only 58% rated good-excellent as of 24th July (previously at 68% on 19th July). Despite this, globally key cereal crops are yielding better than expected including the EU and Russian wheat crops. In contrast milling wheat supplies are tightening due to drought in the US, Australia and Canada and heavy rains spoiling hagbergs in Germany. Conditions for US maize and soya have improved in recent weeks. Overall these trends suggest a larger than expected world feed grain crop and global feed grain prices have weakened. The strength of the euro and weakness of sterling have helped cushion UK price effects with wheat prices down around £4-£5/t in the last month.

UK and Scottish News

- Demand for distilling barley is expected to rise this harvest, given the recent strong growth in whisky exports driven by the weak pound and strong global economy. The area of spring barley in Scotland in 2017 was estimated unchanged on last year at 239,000 ha by AHDB. It now all comes down to yield and quality which is still a major unknown given the very variable conditions from very dry in the spring to spells of wet weather more recently. However, it is hard to see it being a bumper crop so expect Scottish distilling barley prices to be at a good premium over the English market.
- Catchy weather is delaying the northern EU and UK harvest. It is too early to be definitive on overall UK cereal yields; winter barley yields are average or above in England. Very early indications are that wheat yields in the south of England are also relatively good. The key question from the wet conditions is will milling wheat keeps its hagbergs? If not, more of it may go in the feed pile and bring the feed price down. Early English spring barley yields have reportedly been below average in the south of England, however, the later cut crops will tell the full story. In Scotland winter barley grain yields have been variable from very poor on light ground to average to good on heavier soils. Straw yields appear down, no doubt reflecting the dry spring.
- There is a bigger UK crop of sugar beet pulp (SBP) this year, which is estimated to be three times the volume available to the feed trade compared to last year. Winter prices are not

yet available but the main driver of the value of SBP is the price of wheat. Prices are speculated to be around £170/t for home produced SBP for the winter, imported SBP perhaps less. Dry barley is currently making £120/t ex farm, with moist barley less and shippers exporting at more than that. Old crop barley will be worth a few pounds more.

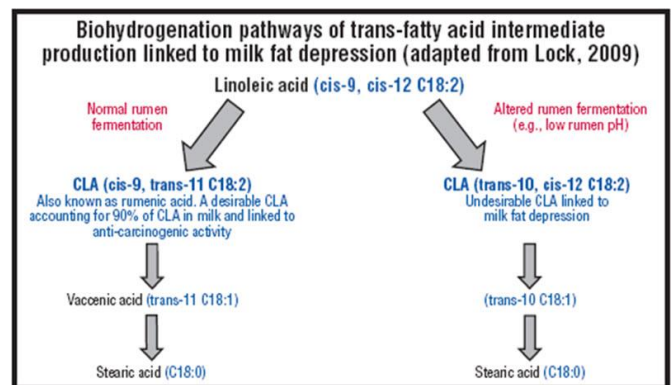
- With more distilleries going down the route of AD plants for their by-products there is less pot ale and draff available and virtually no barley dark grains (Daluaire is still running but likely to be uncompetitive in price). Vivergo and Ensus bioethanol plants are still offering dark grains and are available for suppliers to buy forward all year round compared to the twice a year traditional price offerings from other distilleries.
- Other by-products from the food industry are on the market, such as bread and biscuit meal. Bread is likely to be tight as in Scotland there is a limited tonnage produced with odd loads available from England. Although bread appears good value against barley, it is likely that it will be limited to customers that have been long-term buyers. Bread also needs careful handling/storage due to its high moisture content. Biscuit meal is more available and, provided it is used correctly, is a great high energy and palatable addition to dairy rations as a partial cereal replacement.
- Soya has had ups and downs as usual, depending on the market forces and weather spikes, and it remains hovering around the £300-320/t area delivered for the winter. Big users of soya should be in touch regularly with suppliers to buy at the best price. Rapemeal is currently around the £190/t mark and will likely increase a bit for the winter.
- Barley straw is currently trading around £55-60/t in bales off the field and hay around £75-80/t. Silage is currently around £10-12/bale and demand is low as expected at this time of year.

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Understanding Milk Fat Depression

Milk fat is the most variable component in milk, and can be affected by changes in genetics, management and nutrition. Milk fat depression (MFD) is where milk fat is reduced by more than 0.2% and is caused by changes in the metabolism of dietary fats or oils in the rumen. Altered metabolism away from the normal pathway is due mainly to the amount of vegetable oil in the ration (made up of different fatty acids) and reduced rumen pH.

Under normal circumstances, the pathway of fatty acid metabolism in the rumen does not cause milk fat content to reduce. However, the altered pathway produces certain “intermediate” fatty acid compounds (mainly trans fatty acids) which, if even only a few grams, can reduce milk fat by over 0.5 percentage units (see diagram below).



If there is more vegetable oil in the diet than the cow can process, the normal pathway of metabolism is overwhelmed, and these “bad” trans fatty acids can be produced. This pathway is also more common when rumen pH is lowered.

MFD can be addressed by minimising or removing ingredients known to have a high oil content. Examples are distillers grains (especially maize based ones) and wet distillery by-products, higher in the types of fatty acids which can depress milk fat when fed at high levels. Oil is generally toxic to rumen micro-organisms and if the oil content from natural sources exceeds 5 to 5.5% in the ration dry matter, fibre digestion may be reduced, leading to MFD. A higher oil content may be tolerated (up to 6-7%), if using rumen bypass fat ingredients.

MFD was previously an issue in the Langhill research herd at Crichton Royal farm, where cows were fed a ration purely based on by-products, and were producing milk with an unacceptably low level of milk fat, which was not commercially viable (see table below). The inclusion of by-products in the ration was extreme for the purpose of research and MFD arose from a combination of low rumen pH, insufficient effective fibre (constrained by research requirements) and possibly excessive unsaturated oil content of the diet.

By-products included in the ration that may have contributed to MFD were oily sources; maize distillers dark grains, soyabean meal and rapemeal. High starch and sugars came from feeding biscuit meal, breakfast cereal and whey permeate and contributed to reduced rumen pH.

Average milk yield and butterfat % in Langhill Experimental Cows between September 2016 and March 2017 (source: CIS)

Diet Group	Genetic Line	Average Milk Yield (kg)	Average Butterfat (%)
Home-grown	Control	23.6	3.84
Home-grown	Select	25.6	4.26
By-product	Control	28.3	3.10
By-product	Select	34.8	3.37

Managing rumen pH and minimising the risk of acidosis is critical to reduce MFD. Rumen microbes require a pH over 6 to effectively digest fibre to produce acetate; the precursor for milk fat synthesis. Below pH6, fibre digesting bacteria start to die off and the end products of fermentation can constrain milk fat synthesis in the mammary gland.

Important factors to consider are:

- Avoid feeding too much starch and sugars and sources of starch that are rapidly degradable (e.g. bakery and cereal by-products and finely ground cereals, especially wheat).
- Minimise TMR sorting (common in dry rations over 50% dry matter). This leads to cows eating less effective fibre, favouring finer particles of concentrate/grain and reduces cud chewing. Adequately process forages, and add liquid feeds or water. Compact feeding, where the concentrate portion of the ration is soaked in water for 12 hours before mixing in forage, can eliminate sorting.

- Provide sufficient effective fibre for good cudging behaviour and saliva production. This will increase the natural buffer from sodium bicarbonate in saliva to the rumen. Avoid over processing forages and aim for a minimum forage to concentrate ratio of 40:60 percent, with NDF from forage a minimum of 20%.
- Avoid slug feeding when cows consume large volumes of feed. This not only applies to parlour cake but also the TMR, if the cow has been unable to access feed for an extended period of time. Once the cow starts eating again and consumes a large volume of feed, her rumen is not as full or as well buffered, leading to a drop in pH. Ensure feed is available for at least 22 hours/day, push up regularly (every 2 hours during the day), minimise time away from the feedbunk and ensure adequate feeding space (30-35 inches for milking cows).

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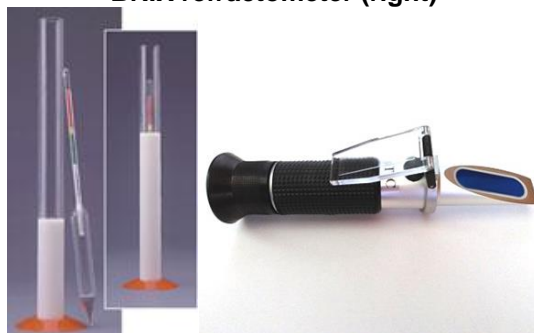
Colostrum – Part 3: Measuring Quality

In our last edition we talked about the important three “Qs” in relation to colostrum feeding: quickly, quality and quantity. When it comes down to judging colostrum quality there are a few golden rules that can help us to make the “go or no-go” decision:

- Never use colostrum with bloody spots.
- Discard dirty colostrum, especially if it is contaminated with faeces (always remember to milk colostrum into a clean, disinfected bucket!).
- Do not use very watery and thin colostrum.

You cannot tell the quality of colostrum just by looking at it. Two relatively inexpensive tools to measure colostrum quality are colostrometers and refractometers (see below).

A colostrometer (left) with measuring cylinder and BRIX refractometer (right)



While colostrometers are easily available, cheap (or even free!) they are not always put to good use! It is not unusual to come across them still in their original packaging on farm and excuses for not using them are often due to their fragility and fear of breaking them. Also, the accuracy of the colostrometer reading is affected by temperature. Manufacturers advise colostrum to be at room temperature (20-25°C) when testing, which unfortunately is not very practical, having to wait until it has cooled down and then warmed up again to feed at body temperature. No wonder some farmers may find this process too time-consuming and colostrometers remain in their packaging!

Despite this, a colostrometer is a perfectly adequate tool to measure colostrum quality if you can manage the working protocol to take account of temperature. Colostrometers usually come with a measuring cylinder. Whisk the colostrum with a clean stainless steel whisk and pour some into the measuring cylinder. Place the colostrometer into the sample of colostrum and allow it to settle. Note the colour level at which the colostrometer settles to determine quality.

Guide to colostrum quality measured with a colostrometer

Reading	Quality	
Green	SUPERIOR	≥ 50 g/litre IgG
Amber	MEDIUM	20-49 g/litre IgG
Red	POOR	≤ 20 g/litre IgG

BRIX refractometers are very easy to use and are more robust than colostrometers. They provide an instant reading and are very reliable as they are not affected by temperature. There are expensive digital versions available, but more simple ones, can be purchased for less than £30. They should become an essential tool on every farm to assess colostrum quality.

When using the refractometer, a drop of colostrum is placed on the lens and made airtight. A beam of light is shone through the colostrum sample. The amount of light that is refracted by the solids in the sample is measured and read on a scale (0-30%) within the device. On the BRIX scale, 22% is equivalent to 50g of IgG in a litre of colostrum (so 3 litres of colostrum at 22% will provide the recommended 150g of IgG for the calf's first feed).

Feeding recommendations based on quality as measured by a BRIX refractometer

BRIX Reading	Colostrum Quality	Action
> 22%	Superior	Use as a first feed
20-22%	Medium	Only use for second or third feed
< 20%	Poor	Do not use as colostrum

The next step is to then monitor the success of colostrum management within the calf. This can be done using blood tests in calves less than seven days old. Serum refractometry and ZST testing are both simple and cheap methods which provide a guide to antibody (or immunoglobulin) levels in the calf. Specific ELISA tests for directly measuring immunoglobulins are becoming more widely available. Ask your vet for details.

Blood antibody levels should be measured routinely as part of regular calf health monitoring. This means that a problem can be detected quickly, before levels of disease and mortality begin to increase. On a herd basis at least 80% of sampled calves should have absorbed adequate levels of antibodies. If blood antibody levels are not measured routinely, then this should be undertaken when levels of navel ill, scour or pneumonia are at unacceptable levels. Blood sample healthy, rather than sick calves, as dehydration affects the validity of the test.

In the September edition advice on colostrum storage, pasteurisation, freezing and thawing will be discussed.

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SRUC Lameness Research

Lameness is a major health problem in UK dairy production, with large consequences for animal welfare, production and profitability. It is very difficult to accurately estimate the incidence of lameness. However, a recent review by Archer et al. (2010) showed an average 50 limb cases per 100 cows each year, with a range from 5 to 170, demonstrating the enormous potential for improvement. Over the past 5 years, the SRUC Dairy Research and Innovation Centre have been collaborating with the Vet School at the University of Nottingham to investigate management practices that could reduce the risk of lameness in dairy cows. Specifically, studies have focused on:

a) The relationship between body condition score (BCS) and risk of lameness

Cows in extended periods of negative energy balance mobilise body tissue reserves to meet energy requirements. This can have a detrimental effect on health and fertility. Body condition scoring indicates the levels of body energy reserves in the cow. Assessed weekly on a scale of 0 to 5, with increments of 0.25, the study showed that cows with a BCS <2 are at greatest risk of mild or severe lameness. Conversely, a BCS above 2.0 is correlated with a reduced risk of mild or severe lameness. This study provided further evidence for a minimum target BCS threshold. A cow's body condition should be held at BCS ≥ 2 for control of severe lameness and ≥ 2.75 for optimum control of mild lameness. More importantly, this and related studies, which concentrated on the lesions of claw horn disruption, sole ulcer, sole haemorrhage, and white line disease, have demonstrated that cow thinness precedes lameness, due to thinning of the digital cushion in the hoof.

b) Lameness in dairy heifers; impacts of hoof lesions present around first calving on future lameness, milk yield and culling risk

High and low scores for white line and sole lesions in heifers were associated with a greater lifetime risk of future lameness than medium scores. High sole lesion scores and digital dermatitis were associated with a reduction in average daily milk yield. It was concluded that the current high prevalence of more severe claw horn lesions in heifers is likely to have a large impact on health, welfare and productivity over their lifetime. However the results also showed that mild sole lesions are associated with an overall reduced risk of premature culling in dairy cows. This may mean that a mild insult may be beneficial to claw health, if adaptive changes occur in response to the insult during a time when the claw is able to recover and become more biomechanically resilient. Identifying and implementing husbandry practices which reduce the occurrence of severe claw horn lesions is essential for the future sustainability of dairy production.

c) The impact of existing foot trimming recommendations on the modern dairy cow

Recent research has led to new recommendations for dairy cow foot trimming. The hind feet of Holstein-Friesian cows were collected at post-mortem examination and specialised

scanning was used to measure the feet in great detail. For the past 30 years, the Dutch Five Step method has been widely employed by UK farmers, vets and foot trimmers. The first step in this method advises trimming the toe length to 75mm, using average values deemed safe for Friesian cows 30 years ago. However, this new research has found that when trimming the toe to a point, 85% of the examined claws would have been cut too short if this instruction was followed. Many advocate leaving a 5mm step and, even if this was done, 55% of the examined claws would have been over-trimmed.

The study concluded that there should be a minimum recommended claw length for Holstein-Friesian cows. It proposed that this should be 90mm (measured from the proximal limit of wall horn) when trimming to a point and 85mm when a step is left. It identified that claw length increased with age and therefore for younger animals small reductions could be made. For the majority of first and second lactation animals this would mean lengths of 85mm (when trimmed to point) and 80mm (when step left) would be appropriate. These measures will reduce the risk of overtrimming by less experienced operators and allow better comparisons between recommendations from different sources in future.

The above work has been lead by the University of Nottingham and is also AHDB Dairy funded as part of the animal health and welfare research partnership.

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Ischaemic Teat Necrosis

PhD scientist and vet, Hayley Crosby, explains how you can help with her research into a new and emerging disease in dairy cattle, Ischaemic Teat Necrosis (ITN).

The cause of the disease, how much disease is present in Great Britain and the risk factors associated with the disease are all unknown. Worryingly, there are anecdotal reports of herds with up to 20% of heifers affected and there are no known effective treatments for this disease.

ITN presents as a dry, dark red to black area on the skin at the base of the teat (see photos 1 and

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2) that may extend down the teat towards the teat end and/or up on to the skin of the udder. These lesions are highly irritable to the cow and can cause her to constantly lick her teats until she has removed them (see photo 3). Once the teats have been lost the cow is often culled on welfare grounds. The lesion appears to be mostly confined to the skin and does not directly cause mastitis. Mastitis may, however, occur due to an inability to milk the quarter and secondary infection.

Photo 1

ITN lesion on the right hind teat before self-trauma has occurred. There is a dry, dark red to black area that is centred on the base of the teat and extends both down the teat and up on to the skin of the udder.



Photo 2

The teat in the distance has a typical ITN lesion prior to self-trauma. The teat closest to the camera has an ITN lesion with secondary mastitis in the affected quarter.



Photo 3

The udder of a cow that was constantly licking her teats. She has removed 2 teats herself and has the same lesion on the 3rd teat. (Photograph courtesy of Mike Thorne, Rutland Vets).



As the cause of bovine ITN is currently unknown, research into this disease is essential. AHDB Dairy are funding work at the University of Liverpool in an attempt to find some answers. To do this we need your help. We are keen to hear from anyone with experience of the disease, no matter how small the information. Please contact vet Hayley on +44(0)7765 456529 or via email hcrosby@liverpool.ac.uk. For updates and further information please go to www.liverpool.ac.uk/BovineITN

SRUC Barony Campus Dairy Update

The 17th of July was an exceptionally busy day at SRUC Barony Campus Dairy Farm. Second cut silage and winter barley wholecrop was taken and the dairy herd went up to three times a day milking.

Barley wholecrop harvest at SRUC Barony Campus Farm



Two hundred acres of second cut silage was cut (yielding 5t/acre) and wilted between 24 to 36 hours to approximately 45% dry matter. In hindsight the wilting period could have been reduced, given such a high dry matter. However, a silage inoculant additive (Micron Advance) was applied which hopefully improved the fermentation and will aid stability of the silage and reduce heating and spoilage risk at feedout.

Winter barley wholecrop came in at 55% dry matter and yielded 10t/acre. A corn cracker was used on the harvester to ensure the grain will be

digested and fully utilised by the cows. Nine acres were also combined yielding 4t/acre at 80% dry matter. The aim is to cut the spring wheat for wholecrop around the end of August/first week in September.

This year's first cut silage is now being fed and analysed at 22% dry matter, 11.5ME and 14.2% crude protein. Whilst milk yields picked up, the feeding of first cut silage also coincided with when the herd started 3 times a day milking. The group of high yielders increased by 1 litre/cow and the lows by 1.5 litres (at time of writing on 25th July) and cows are still settling in to their new routine. Previously cows were milked at 05.00 and 15.50 and milking times with the new routine are now 5.00, 13.00 and 20.00. The high group is currently averaging 37.5 litres, the lows 26 litres and the robot herd 30 litres.

Keeping on top of lame cows is a constant challenge, especially when the majority of the herd is housed in the summer (only lows go to grass). Digital dermatitis is the main cause of lame cows with the incidence currently around 20%, based on recent locomotion scoring. This is despite footbathing every day with 5% formalin and six monthly foot trimming. It is thought that digital dermatitis may be coming into the herd from the dry cows so setting up a facility to footbath dry cows on a regular basis might be the answer.

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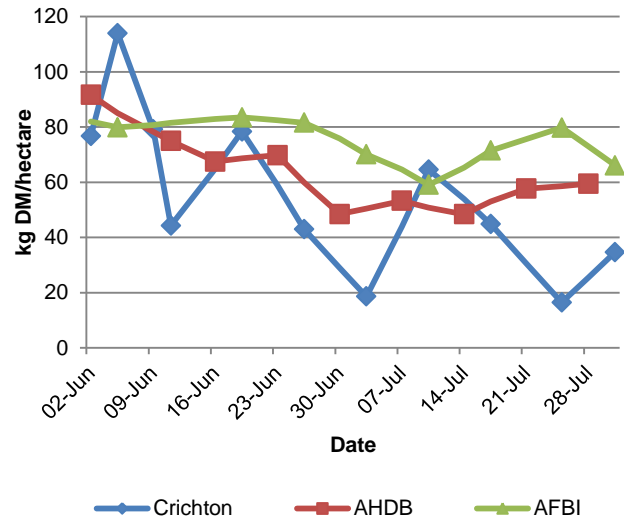
Grass Growth

Going by the following graph, grass growth is starting to tail off around the country from all three sources. Despite this, growth rates are still above those of last year as of the end of July, according to both AHDB Dairy and AFBI in Northern Ireland. Growth rates will likely continue to slow down as day length and temperatures continue their seasonal decline.

Grass quality is also reducing, with energy and protein values dropping to 11.7MJ/kg DM and 22.4% respectively (Source AHDB Dairy). This coincides with higher fibre content in swards, as post-grazing residuals get harder to achieve later in the season. To improve the quality of re-growths, remove excess grass by post-mowing paddocks or big baling. Rotation lengths should

start to be increased from mid August to start building up autumn grazing covers.

UK Grass Growth



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Dates for your Diary

- 16th August - **Clearing Open Evening - SRUC Aberdeen Campus.** SRUC Aberdeen Campus, Ferguson Building, Craibstone Estate, Aberdeen, AB21 9YA. Time 16.00-20.00.
- 16th-17th August - **BCVA Masterclass: Cow Behaviour and Human Interactions.** Reaseheath College, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 6DF. Sign up at <https://www.bcva.eu/cpd/bcva-masterclass-cow-behaviour>
- 21st August - **Get Moo-ing on Mobility.** Hillhead, Kirkpatrick Fleming, Lockerbie, DG11 3NQ. Time 10.00-14.30. To book your place contact KE Events hub on 01904 771216 or email ke.events@ahdb.org.uk
- 22nd August - **Latest Research on Pneumonia and How to Communicate it to Farmers Webinar.** Time 19.00-20.15. Registration through AHDB Website Events Page.
- 22nd-23rd August - **Cattle Foot Trimming Course.** SRUC Barony Campus, Parkgate, Dumfries, DG1 3NE. Contact team training 01387 242918 or kyra.redpath@sruc.ac.uk

Milk Manager NEWS

- 25th August - **Thainstone Spectacular.** Thainstone Agricultural Centre, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, AB51 5WU.
- 29th August - **Reducing Pressures on the Foot: A Key to Reducing Lameness Webinar.** Time 19.00-20.00. Registration through AHDB Website Events Page.
- 5th September - **Reducing Pneumonia Risk in Beef and Dairy Calves – Challenges and Solutions.** Time 19.00-20.00. Registration through AHDB Website Events Page.
- 12th September - **AHDB Calf to Calving: Who's Made the Grade?** Glasgow. Venue and time TBC.
- 13th September - **UK Dairy Day.** International Centre, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 4JH.
- 26th September - **Dumfries and Galloway Dairy Women Network.** Laurie Arms, 11-13 Main Street, Haugh of Urr, Castle Douglas, DG7 3YA. For more information please contact

Tracey Roan – 07919 278471 or Teresa Dougall @ NFUS on 07718 425053.



SRUC Barony Campus Training Courses

- 23rd August - **Pesticide PA1 Safe use of Pesticides.**
- 24th August – **Pesticide PA6 Hand-held Sprayer.**
- 25th August – **PA6 Tractor Mounted Sprayer**
- 31st August-1st September – **Telehandler Experienced Operator**
- 28th September – **ATV Experiences Operator**
- 29th September – **Telehandler Refresher.**

For more details: www.sruc.as.uk/training or call 01387 242918 or email BaronyTrainingServices@sruc.ac.uk

For any further enquiries regarding the information in this newsletter please contact:



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