

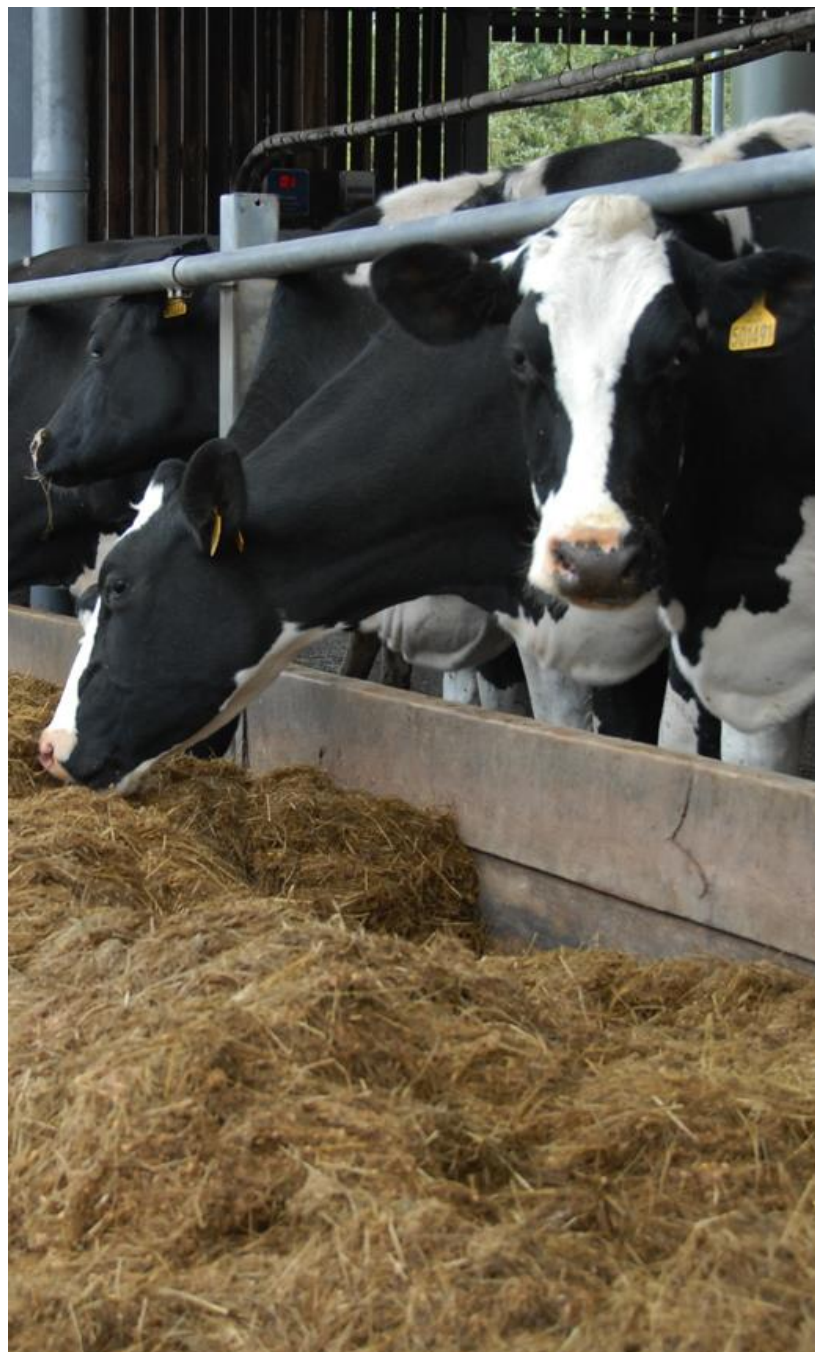
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# Milk Manager NEWS



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**This month's editor:**  
**Lorna MacPherson**



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## Market Update

### UK Wholesale Dairy Commodity Market

- Fonterra's recent online GDT auction (7<sup>th</sup> March 2017) produced another fall in the weighted average price across all products reaching US \$3,512/t. This is a decrease of 6.3% from the previous auction on 21<sup>st</sup> February and almost a 10% reduction in the last month. The biggest reductions were seen in skim milk powder (15.5% to \$2118/t) and whole milk powder (12.4% to \$2782). Increased volumes of powder have been forecast as a result of milk production increases in New Zealand. It was expected that production in the 2016/17 season would be 7% below the previous year, but this has since risen to only 5% below. The fall in global commodities have filtered through to UK commodity prices shown in the table below:

Commodity	Feb 2017 £/T	Jan 2017 £/T	% Diff Monthly	Feb 2016 £/T	% Diff 2016-2017
Bulk Cream	1,540	1,620	-5%	860	+79
Butter	3,450	3,600	-4%	1950	+77
SMP	1,700	1,850	-8%	1,200	+42

Source AHDB Dairy - based on trade agreed from 1<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> February 2017

- The 2.2ppl drop in AMPE from January to February was due to a 4% drop in the butter price to £3,450/t and an 8% reduction in SMP price to £1,700/t. There was also a 1.4ppl reduction in MCVE as a result of mild cheddar prices falling. Despite a 1% rise in whey powder price, whey butter fell by 5%. There is currently little trade for mild cheddar as buyers and sellers are waiting to see what spring milk production volumes are.

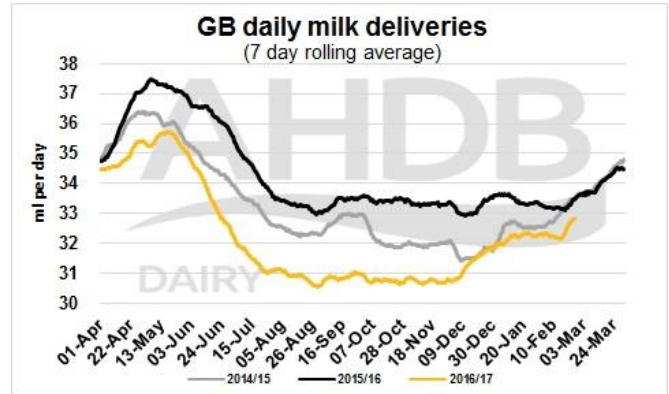
	Feb 2017	Jan 2017	12 months previously	Net Amount less 2ppl Haulage – Feb 17
AMPE	28.30ppl	30.50ppl	16.0ppl	26.30ppl
MCVE	32.30ppl	33.70ppl	17.40ppl	30.30ppl

Source AHDB Dairy

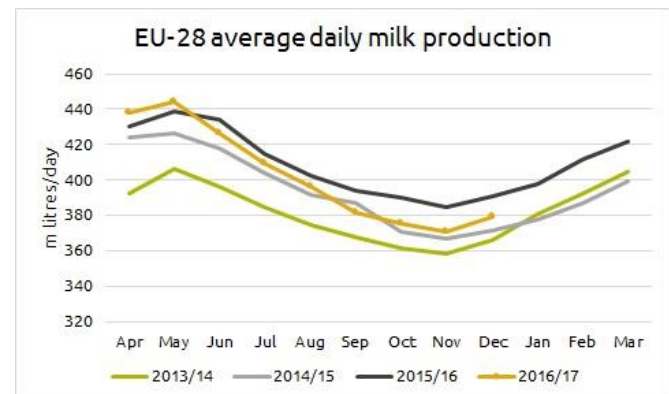
- There is increasing pressure for the EU to release more skim milk powder onto the market at a price that buyers are willing to pay. After 5 tenders only 40T of intervention powder stocks have been sold. While the Commission is insisting on a price of €2,150/t, German SMP fell to €1,750/t as of 13<sup>th</sup> March, making

intervention stocks look very expensive in comparison.

### UK and EU Milk Deliveries



- UK milk deliveries continue to rise, with production now only 2.2% down on the same week last year (for week ending 4<sup>th</sup> March), which equates to 0.7 million litres.
- UK milk production for December 2016 was 59.33 million litres down on December 2015.



Source: ADHB Dairy

- In the EU, milk production for 28 member states for December 2016 is running at 2.9% below the same month in 2015.
- Germany, France, UK, Netherlands and Poland were again the largest milk producing countries in the EU for December 2016, producing a total of 7,701 million litres, which was 3.8% back on production compared to December 2015.
- The largest planned milk volume reductions through the EU milk reduction scheme were from Germany (278 million litres) and France (176 million litres), for the first reduction window (October to December 2016). UK dairy farmers

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applied for the third largest reduction volume at 109 million litres. As a whole, dairy farmers across the EU applied to reduce milk production by 1029 million litres for the same period (source AHDB Dairy).

## Monthly Price Movements for March 2017

Commodity Produced	Company Contract	Price Increase	Standard Litre Price for March 2017
Liquid & Cheese	<b>Arla Farmers UK</b>	0.38ppl	27.45ppl Liquid, 28.55ppl Manufacturing
Liquid & Cheese	<b>Arla Direct</b>	0.25ppl ( for both liquid and (manufacturing)	25ppl Liquid 25.99ppl manufacturing
Liquid & Brokered Milk	<b>First Milk Mainland Scotland</b>	No change	26.09ppl
Cheese	<b>Fresh Milk Company (Lactalis)</b>	No information available for March	Feb Price 28.47ppl. Level profile price 29.05ppl
Liquid & Manufacture	<b>Grahams</b>	No information available for March	Feb Price 26.75ppl
Liquid & Manufacture	<b>Muller</b>	No change	26.69 ppl
Liquid, Powder & Brokered	<b>Yew Tree Dairies</b>	No information available for March	Feb Price 27.5ppl Standard A litre price

- Muller are following in the footsteps of Yew Tree Dairies by offering farmers futures contracts. The offer is available from this summer to Muller's 800 non-aligned farmers, allowing them to fix up to 25% of their milk production on a milk price based on the [www.milkprices.com/FC](http://www.milkprices.com/FC) Stone published prices/UK Milk Futures Equivalent (UKMFE). The volumes available that can be fixed will depend on the physical quantity of milk that Muller can secure back-to-back contracts with its ingredients customers.
- Muller will hold its standard non-aligned milk price for April. This will be the second month in a row that milk price has not moved, indicating the pressures on milk prices for liquid processors as spring approaches. The

February retail supplement for non-aligned milk contracts has been confirmed at 0.74ppl, slightly lower than the estimate of 0.82ppl, due to increased milk volumes.

- ASDA has now launched free range milk. It is the first supermarket to brand milk as free range, based on milk being supplied from herds which spend at least 180 days and nights at grass. Initially 70,000 litres each week will be sold through more than 100 ASDA stores priced at £1.50 for 2 litres.

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## Straights Update

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

£/T for 29t loads delivery + £7/t haulage	Mar 17	Apr 17	May-Oct 17	Nov 17-Apr 18
<b>Proteins</b>				
Hipro Soya	332	332	333	337
Rapeseed Meal	205	205	May-Jul 199 Aug-Oct 181	191
EU Wheat Distillers	POA	204	May 204 Jul-Oct 202	202
<b>Starch</b>				
Wheat	153	154	May-Jul 157 Aug-Oct 147	150
Barley	127	127	May-Jul 128 Aug-Oct 117	122
Maize	184	185	May 186 Jun-Oct 190	-
<b>Fibre</b>				
Sugar Beet Pulp -home produced	183	183	183	183
Soya Hulls	POA	POA	Asa140	142

Source: Straights Direct on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Barley and wheat prices are based on delivery to central belt. For North-East, deduct £5/t for wheat and add £1/t for barley.

Courtesy of Julian Bell, Senior Rural Business Consultant, SAC Consulting.

Prices do not include seller's margin.

- Wheat is in short supply** in Lothians and the Borders due to ENSUS drawing 50,000t of wheat per month from as far as Edinburgh. Cameronbridge Distillery in Fife is on a go-slow or part closed, reducing wheat demand (and

limiting prices) further north. The UK wheat balance sheet is looking very tight this season.

- **The potential for exports continues to increase** as UK wheat prices are discounted to that on the continent. This is partly due to a drop in the pound, with Sterling falling 2% last week due to concerns about the economic impact of Brexit.
- **The Scottish wheat area is expected to be up** compared to last year. Furthermore, good winter conditions mean a continued wheat surplus is perhaps likely in Scotland from harvest onwards so there is probably no Scottish price premium to England again for the coming harvest year.
- Over the whole of the UK, data from AHDB suggests that new crop winter wheat acreage sown by 1 December was 5% lower than last year. However, with prices increasing and additional sowing over the winter, it is expected that the acreage for wheat has grown. Nevertheless, the UK wheat crop is expected to be at its lowest since 2013.
- **Feed barley supplies remain tight** due to the small crop. The price differential between barley and wheat has continued to widen. Specific weight issues with the 2016 barley crop and a move towards more milling wheat varieties hasn't helped and it is likely that the price gap may continue to widen. A larger spring barley area in England is likely, as farmers look to substitute rapemeal and tackle black-grass.
- **A static or lower spring barley area is expected in Scotland this spring** due to excellent autumn/winter weather conditions and maximum winter/spring wheat plantings going in. English growers are switching to high yielding brewing varieties, while whisky production is picking up, hence the supply of distilling barley varieties could be very tight this harvest.
- **With Scottish malting barley demand expected to rise this harvest**, this could squeeze feed barley supply depending on yield and quality achieved. For Scottish distilling barley at a maximum of 1.65% N, up to 50% could be contracted at a £20/T premium above

November wheat futures (currently £141+£20 = £161/t ex farm) with the remainder at harvest spot price, which is too early to predict.

- **Overall world grain market remains well supplied** with adequate stocks. In the US, slow export pace and increased spring sowing estimates have pushed prices lower. The world market remains dependent on weather over the next few months and the pace of US spring plantings in particular. Exchange rates remain key to UK prices and with Article 50 expected to be triggered by the end of March, more sharp swings in the value of Sterling (up or down!), and hence grain prices, could be expected in the next few weeks.
- USDA's latest forecasts as of the 9<sup>th</sup> March have reported positive results so far for Brazil's soyabean harvest, which is around halfway completed. Very good yields to date have led to projections of a 4Mt increase to 108Mt projected output. Output figures have also been boosted for maize, with favourable conditions increasing projected output from the first crop and a rapid start to plantings of the second crop. Brazil's output was raised by 5Mt to 91.5Mt (source: AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds).

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## Cow Health and Comfort in Your Shed

'Cow health and comfort in your shed' was the topic of discussion at the latest Farming for a Better Climate meeting, run by SAC Consulting. Guest speaker Jamie Robertson took the group of farmers around Muirhouse Farm at Crosshouse, Kilmarnock to show where small alterations to existing buildings could help to make big improvements. Muirhouse Farm is run by Alistair Love. The 90 cows average 9,700 litres and are housed in a shed built in 1978. Alterations have been made to the shed over the years, including plastic cubicles, rubber matting in the collecting area and slatted tanks with a scraping robot. Jamie explained the 5 principles of good housing:

- Moisture
- Air speed
- Temperature

- Fresh air
- Hygiene

The first part of the farm that was visited was the calf shed, where the 5 principles were discussed. Moisture – there is a great temptation to wash floors around calf pens to keep them clean. However, this water then takes heat out of the air when evaporating. This can raise the lower critical temperature causing severely reduced growth. New-born calves require 15°C to allow them to grow to their potential. There are very few days in the year where this temperature is achieved all day. These animals are in effect monogastrics and do not use as much energy to regulate and maintain body temperature, compared to fully grown cattle. Jamie is therefore a big fan of using jackets on calves, or using quartz heaters fitted to a thermostat, as these are both good ways to keep calves warm.

Getting fresh air to calves, without causing a draft can be difficult. Calves need 0.04m<sup>2</sup> of air outflow and twice as much space to allow air in per calf. The siting of this inflow is just as important. The calf shed at Muirhouse had enough inlet space, however, because it was from a door on either end it created a wind tunnel, with some calves getting a draft, whilst others were situated in stale air pockets. The use of a fan and air tube would help solve this problem. The holes should be situated so that the air runs out of velocity just at the calf's nose so as not to give them a chill. Jamie strongly advised having a period of the year where the calf shed will be empty for a thorough clean. If stopping calving is not possible then building a small shelter in a field using heston bales of straw and some tin sheets for a roof would also work. He advised doing this in the summer for at least a week to allow the shed to rest.

A great deal of work has taken place in the cubicle shed over the years to improve the welfare of the cows. The walls in front of the cubicles have been taken down to give the cows more lunging space. The cubicles were then changed to plastic cubicles, giving the cows greater comfort when moving in the shed. After replacing the solid floors with slats, Alistair bought a scraping robot. This has helped to reduce sawdust use by 1/3, reduced SCC from 169 to 112 and dropped bactoscans from 36 to 21. Finally rubber matting was installed in the collecting area and parlour as the concrete grooves had worn away. Not only has this

improved the welfare of the herd, but it has also sped up the milking as cows are more confident walking on the rubber.

Jamie highlighted that big improvements could be made to the ventilation for the milking cows. Dairy cattle require 0.2m<sup>2</sup> of inlet per animal for air and 0.1m<sup>2</sup> for outlet on the top. The sides of the shed are sheeted with no inlet for air. Removing these sheets and having 25% of the space open i.e. space boarding with 6 inch (152mm) boards with a 2 inch (51mm) gap between them, would allow for enough air inlet.

The ridge had a very small gap, and opening this to 300mm would allow a much better flow of air. One concern when doing this is that rain will enter the shed. The heat generated from the cows will stop a significant amount of rain entering, due to the stack effect. Jamie suggested trying this in the middle two bays of the shed to observe if this was the case.

Opening the ridge and sides would also allow more light into the shed, another area that could be improved. The majority of the shed was only at 50 lux, whereas the ideal light level for a lactating dairy cow is 200 lux for 16 hours per day. Outside the shed at this point was 800 lux, so there is big potential to improve natural lighting in the shed. Achieving 16 hours of light at this level is not possible year round, so artificial lighting is required. Fitting LED lights into the shed would likely have a big impact on feed intake, milk yield and fertility, and in some cases can pay for themselves within a year.

The last shed visited on the farm was the calving shed. This was a hayshed, clad on three sides and an open front. The question of fresh air was raised. Because the ridge in the shed is closed, there is no difference in pressure to draw in air and so the back of the shed can be stale, despite a large open front. Jamie encouraged farmers to go to the back of their sheds to make sure the air was clean, and if not, look at using space boarding on the sides to allow some airflow. The temperature requirement of the two animals in the shed (the cow and her calf) is another area where farms could improve welfare. With new-born calves requiring a far higher temperature than cows, Jamie suggested treating them like piglets or lambs, giving them a separate area under a heat lamp. Using a cut down IBC would also mean a

clean space for the calf, reducing the infections that could be picked up in the calving pens.

## Discussion on ventilation and temperature outside the calving pen



This meeting was part of Farming for a Better Climate, through the Woodhead Focus Farm. If you would like anymore information on previous meetings or upcoming events please contact [robert.ramsay@sac.co.uk](mailto:robert.ramsay@sac.co.uk)

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## Practicalities and Benefits of Early Spring Grazing

The cost of housing and feeding cattle are the major components of the overall expense of dairy production, and extending the grazing season in late autumn or early spring is one way of improving profitability. Restricted herbage mass and the increased risk of poaching during these periods normally involve cows grazing for a limited number of hours per day. However, in regions with free-draining soils and a mild climate, cows may be fully turned out earlier than has been common practice. The aim is to reduce costs relative to a fully housed, silage fed system rather than to increase milk yield per cow, but several trials have shown that animal performance can be enhanced.

It is essential that practicalities of early spring grazing are addressed in the autumn before the spring grazing. Fencing of the paddocks and ensuring a sufficient water supply with tracks and gateways to move the animals around the different paddocks to be grazed, without damaging fields, is extremely important. The variety of grass grown

as part of the sward for early grazing is essential to attain a sufficient early bite. The incorporation of more Italian ryegrass in the sward, as it has an earlier, more erect growth, can help achieve this.

Dillon et al (2002), found that cows grazing pasture for between 5 to 12 hours per day in February, March and April had lower silage dry matter intake (DMI) and higher total forage DMI than those kept indoors, resulting in significantly higher yields of milk, fat, protein and lactose. Sayers and Mayne (2001) showed that early turnout of dairy cows to pasture in March and April for as little as 2 hours/day reduced silage consumption significantly, and also increased milk and protein yield, relative to fully housed animals that were offered grass silage with a low level of concentrates.

A comparison of early turnout (mid-February) of Holstein-Friesian cows that received a low level of concentrate (3kg DM/cow/day) with housed cows on a silage and concentrate ration (10.9kg DM/cow/day) undertaken by Kennedy et al (2005), found the grazed group had a higher milk protein yield and concentration. The grazed treatment also resulted in a significant saving in silage and total feed costs.

Farmers also need to make decisions about the length of time cows spend on grazing swards and whether to supplement them with silage when they are housed during an extended grazing period. Silage supplementation when cows returned indoors after short grazing periods indicated that restricting pasture access time in early lactation does not affect milk production performance; supplementing cows with grass silage does not increase milk production but reduces grazing efficiency (Kennedy et al, 2011).

Although Laidlaw and Mayne (2000) found that the date of defoliation up to December had no effect on spring herbage mass in the subsequent early spring (March and April), other research groups (Roche et al 1996; O'Donovan et al 2002) found that a delayed final date of pasture grazing in the autumn significantly reduced the availability of herbage in the following spring, which could be seen into the following May. Each 1 day delay in closing between 1st October and 11th December reduced spring herbage mass by 15 kg DM/ha. This contradiction between autumn grazing and spring yields are likely to be a result of geographical and climatic differences. However,

Hennessy et al (2006), found there was no significant effect of autumn-closing date in a site in the NE of Ireland whereas in the south, earlier autumn closing reduced the herbage mass in late March by up to 0.34t DM/ha and that delayed winter grazing reduced the herbage mass in late March by up to 0.85t DM/ha. These effects on herbage mass continued into the summer, reducing the herbage mass for the period from late March to July by up to 2t DM/ha. It is now widely accepted that, in order to maximise the availability of herbage for early grazing in February, March and April, a series of autumn closing dates need to be established on the network of grazing paddocks, creating a 'wedge' of grass for spring grazing. A whole farm approach is generally most sensible, with grazing organised across a series of paddocks.

In addition to the effect of spring grazing pressure (stocking rate) on the subsequent sward morphology, the timing of the start of grazing in spring (turnout date) also has a significant residual effect. O'Donovan and Delaby (2008) showed that a March turnout date, although having a significantly lower herbage mass, led to higher herbage quality during mid-April to mid-June with a significantly higher leaf proportion and less dead material in the grazing horizon. Swards grazed in early spring allowed higher grass utilisation and higher milk production performance when grazed at a medium stocking rate.

Slurry applications to grazing fields have to be planned both for the weather conditions and the amount of time before grazing commences. An application too soon before grazing will result in rejection of the sward and thought needs to be given to any Nitrogen Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) restrictions that may apply.

This work was funded by AHDB Dairy through the SRUC Dairy Innovation and Research Centre. References available upon request.

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## New Priority Catchments Rolled Out in Scotland

Scotland's Priority Catchment programme to address water quality issues is being extended to 22 new river catchments as part of the second phase of River Basin Management Plans

(RBMPs). This means that many farms will receive visits from SEPA staff over the coming year to help address diffuse pollution risks. Although many of the main dairy farming areas in south-west Scotland have already been covered under the first phase of 14 priority catchments during 2009-15, the new areas include Dumfries and Annan, as well as east coast areas in Lothian, Fife, Aberdeenshire and Easter Ross (see table).

### Second phase priority catchments (2016-17)

Inverness Coastal	River Nairn
Kincardine Coastal	Dundee Coastal
Dighty Water	Whiteadder Water
River Tweed (Lower)	Urr Water
River Dee (Solway)	Water of Girvan
Cromarty Coastal	River Don
Bervie Water	North Fife Coastal
River Eden	South Fife Coastal
River Esk (Lothian)	East Lothian Coastal
River Tyne	Annan Coastal
Dumfries Coastal	Lochar Water

This work stems from the EU Water Framework Directive that was enacted in 2000, passed into law in Scotland in 2003 and which led to the development of RBMPs with an overall aim of getting 98% of Scotland's waterbodies into good or high status by 2027. At the start of this process, in 2008, 65% of waterbodies met this standard. The reasons for waterbodies not achieving good status are varied and are by no means limited to agriculture. Sewage disposal, urban land use and roads, water abstraction, forestry, changes to river morphology and non-native species all contribute to the problem and are all being addressed under the programme. However, there is no doubt that agriculture has the potential to reduce diffuse pollution risks from soil erosion and run-off, faecal contamination and fertiliser and pesticide run-off.

Under the priority catchment programme, SEPA staff will attend awareness-raising events and will walk the watercourses within the river catchment to identify pollution risk areas. This will be followed up by one-to-one visits to each farmer to discuss the findings and to seek solutions to any problems found. In many cases the problems found will relate to breaches of the General Binding Rules (GBRs) that cover non-licensed activities under the Controlled Activities Regulations 2011. Under the first round of 14 priority catchments from 2009-15 the most

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commonly breached rules were GBR 18 (storage or spreading of manure within 10m of a watercourse), GBR 19 (soil erosion caused by livestock within 5m of a watercourse) and GBR 20 (cultivation within 2m of a watercourse).

It is important to stress that SEPA will seek to work constructively with farmers to address any problems found and will provide advice and help to find effective solutions. Farmers will usually be given a reasonable period of time to resolve any issues and may receive a follow-up visit to assess progress. Examples of existing good practice found on farms will also be highlighted during one-to-one visits.

Support for measures that can help address diffuse pollution risks on the farm may be available through the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS) and, on arable fields, through the Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs) required for the greening element of the Basic Payment Scheme. Fallow or Buffer Strips along watercourses can help ensure GBRs 18 and 20 are met, while AECS water margins, with associated fencing grants and grants for alternative watering, can help address GBR 19 breaches. A variety of alternative watering systems including pasture pumps, solar powered pumps and ram pumps can be funded under AECS.

For further information please contact your local SAC Consulting office or visit the Farming and Water Scotland website at: [https://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120603/farming\\_and\\_water\\_scotland](https://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120603/farming_and_water_scotland)

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## Water Requirements of Calves

Water is a basic requirement of any animal and is critical to stimulate early intake of starter feed and therefore rumen development in dairy calves. It is often assumed that calves receive water through the provision of milk or milk replacer. However, milk bypasses the rumen via the oesophageal groove to the abomasum, where it is digested.

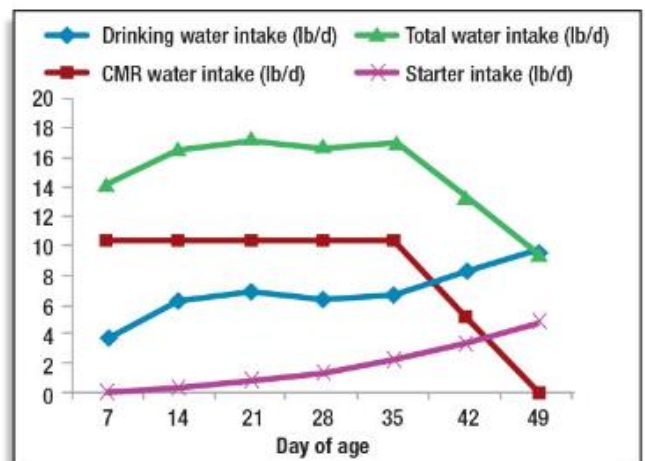
The rumen requires water for rumen development which occurs by the fermentation of starter feed. Fermentation takes place by rumen bacteria, which require water to live in. Calves offered

water free access will eat more starter feed and have a higher daily liveweight gain. This was shown by Kertz, Ruettzel, & Mahoney, where calves offered ad lib water had an increase in starter feed consumption of 31% (129g) and improved daily liveweight gain of 38% (127g) over calves that were not offered water in addition to milk. They also had less scour days.

Calves need a water to starter feed ratio of 4:1. For every 1kg of dry matter from starter feed, the rumen requires 4 litres of water to ferment and digest feed efficiently. Water present in milk or milk replacer will not provide sufficient water to maintain hydration, especially in the rumen, reducing starter feed intake and weight gain.

Water intake in calves fed milk replacer (12.5% inclusion and 20% protein, 20% oil specification) and starter feed during the winter months was measured at the University of Minnesota. The graph below shows that while total water intake declined as calves were weaned, drinking water intake increased as starter feed intake increased throughout the trial period. In the first week of life, water intake averaged 1.9 litres per day, increasing to 4.54 litres per day until day 49.

**Average daily intake of water, milk replacer water, total water (drinking and milk replacer water) and starter intake in calves.**



Source: Progressive Dairyman, March 2016

If offering water to calves after milk consumption, wait at least ten minutes for the oesophageal groove to close. If water is offered immediately after calves have drunk milk, it can pass straight to the abomasum, weakening the milk clot and reducing the efficiency of digestion.



Calves will drink more water if they are about to get scours or some other health issue. It is also known that if calves consume water when they are healthy, they are likely to have fewer days scouring and the outbreak of scour is less severe.

Reference: Kertz, A.F., Ruettzel, L.F. & Mahoney, J.H. 1984. Ad Libitum Water Intake by Neonatal Calves and Its Relationship to Calf Starter Intake, Weight Gain, Faeces Score, and Season. *Journal of Dairy Science*. 67:2964–2969.

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## Neospora in the Dairy Herd

*Neospora caninum* is a parasite that infects cattle and can cause abortions or stillbirths. Cattle become infected in 2 ways:

- By eating *Neospora* oocysts (eggs) from the environment along with food or water.
- As an unborn calf when *Neospora* crosses the placenta from an infected cow.

Infection can arrive on farm by several routes:

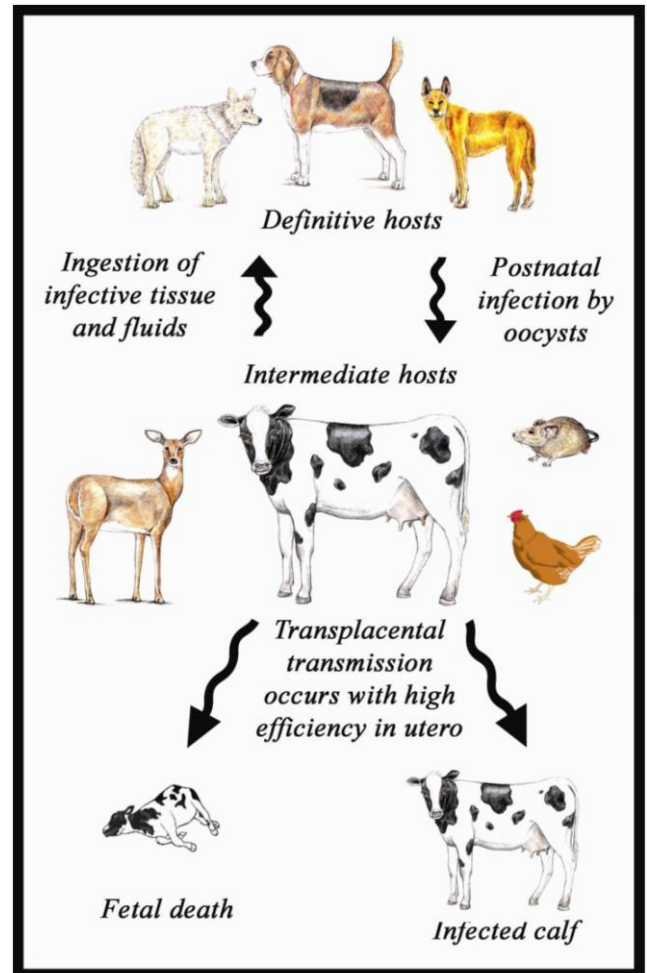
- Via purchase of an infected cow
- Via recently infected dogs
- In feed or water contaminated by dog faeces

Dogs are a vital part of the *Neospora* story (see diagram below). They become infected by eating *Neospora* infected placentas, foetuses/calves or wildlife. The parasite multiplies in their intestines and oocysts are passed in their faeces for two to three weeks. After this the dog is immune and no longer a risk. As oocysts are only shed when the dog is infected for the first time this is most likely to occur in pups or young dogs. The oocysts are thought to survive in the environment for six months or more. After being eaten by a cow the oocysts multiply and then become dormant by forming cysts within tissues. This has no ill effects on the cow which continues to appear healthy. The danger comes during pregnancy when the parasite becomes re-activated and travels to the placenta and unborn calf. What happens next can include:

- Abortion - abortion storms can occur when infection is introduced to a herd for the first time.
- The birth of a healthy, but infected, calf which can go on to abort during its first pregnancy.

- The birth of a calf showing signs of nervous disease. This is uncommon.

### Life cycle of *Neospora caninum*



Infected cows remain infected for life and maintain *Neospora* in the herd by giving birth to infected heifer replacements. There is no evidence of direct cow-to-cow spread.

- Not all infected cows will abort, but they are three to seven times more likely to abort than uninfected cattle.
- Abortions are most common in heifers and in recently infected cows.
- It is estimated that, if retained in the herd, around 5% of infected cows will abort again.
- The best way to screen cows for *Neospora* is by testing a blood sample for antibodies. This is best collected either in late pregnancy or after abortion as antibody levels can rise and fall over time.
- Bulk tank milk samples can also be tested for antibodies but 10-20% of cows need to be

# Milk Manager NEWS

infected before a positive result will be obtained.

- Dogs can also be blood sampled for antibodies. A positive result suggests that the dog has previously shed oocysts but is no longer a risk. Dogs that test negative could be a risk in the future if they eat wildlife or placentas, foetuses or calves that are infected with Neospora.

The following biosecurity measures should be considered:

- Do not allow dogs to eat dead calves, foetuses, placentas or raw meat.
- Do not allow dogs to defecate in pens or other areas where cattle food and water could become contaminated. Footpaths are a possible risk.
- Dispose of dog faeces hygienically.
- Good rodent control.
- Maintain a closed herd.

There is no treatment for Neospora and no vaccines are licensed for use in the UK. In dairy herds, known Neospora positive cows can be bred to a beef bull to avoid the retention of infected heifer replacements.

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## Dates for your Diary

- 23<sup>rd</sup> March - **The Succession Roadshow.** Dundee. Time 19.00. To book contact Penny Johnston t: 0131 333 2445 [penny@sayfc.org](mailto:penny@sayfc.org)
- 23<sup>rd</sup> March – **Scotland Food and Drink Annual Conference.** Double Tree Hilton Glasgow Central, Cambridge Street, Glasgow G2 3HN. Time 12.00.
- 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> March – **Herdsman Foot Trimming.** Location specified on course uptake. For more details contact Embryonics t: 01606 854411 [embryonics@embryonicsltd.co.uk](mailto:embryonics@embryonicsltd.co.uk)
- 28<sup>th</sup> March - **The Succession Roadshow.** Dumfries. Time 19.00. To book contact Penny Johnston t: 0131 333 2445 [penny@sayfc.org](mailto:penny@sayfc.org)
- 5<sup>th</sup> April – **Borderway Monthly Dairy Day.** Borderway Mart, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2RS.
- 12<sup>th</sup> April – **Border and Lakeland Holstein Club Spring Bull Show & Sale.** Borderway Mart, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2RS.
- 19<sup>th</sup> April – **Border and Lakeland Holstein Club Monthly Show and Sale,** Borderway Mart, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2RS.
- 19<sup>th</sup> April – **Special Spring Show and Sale of Jersey Cattle,** Borderway Mart, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2RS.
- 19<sup>th</sup> April – **Special Spring Show and Sale of Red and White Cattle,** Borderway Mart, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2RS.
- 26<sup>th</sup> April – **Special Spring Sale of Montbeliarde,** Borderway Mart, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2RS.

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



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