Lucerne in the limelight
Firm handle on Johne’s disease
Celebration of British Livestock at Christmas
Sheep Breeder has developed from and now incorporates Wool Producer, launched in 2010 in support of the Campaign for Wool, an important and very successful initiative instigated by HRH the Prince of Wales to promote the qualities of wool to an international retail audience and thereby help increase the value of the annual woolclip.

Supplementary publications – Lambing Preview, Summer Preview, Breeding Preview, and Winter Preview are all important additions concentrating on those particularly important seasonal activities that fall within the shepherd’s year and are distributed with Sheep Breeder.

Sheep Breeder is available to all sheep farmers and those associated with the industry. For your free subscription email your request to info@shepherdpublishing.co.uk
Welcome to the summer edition of Cattle Breeder published in conjunction with, and in support of the British Cattle Breeders’ Club.

In this issue we report on the latest bull proofs which offer encouraging signs for the future. We also report a new dairybeef index due in the autumn and feature an award winning Ulster beef farming family whose outstanding herd performance resulted in them being awarded Farmers Weekly’s Beef Farmer of the Year.

In respect of animal health, we look at how to tackle copper deficiency and help eradicate Johne’s disease, the application of homeopathy in the herd and the importance of nutrition in respect of fertility.

The importance of producing good quality forage efficiently remains vitally important to both sheep and cattle sectors. Here we look at Lucerne, a high protein forage legume and over the next couple of issues we will continue to look at efficient and cost effective forage production.

Beef Shorthorns are enjoying a period of great success with a record uptake in registrations and will kindly be providing a heifer at our Christmas celebration of British livestock, see pages 14/15. We also preview Sommet de l’elevage, one of Europe’s major and most enjoyable livestock events to take place in Clermont-Ferrand in October which we recommend and is well worth a visit.

We are continuing to promote our initiative of the above mentioned Celebration of British Livestock at Christmas, in support of The Addington Fund, officially launched at the Royal Welsh Show with the kind support of Animax Veterinary. We encourage all those involved in the British livestock industry to support this exciting event which is attracting much interest. Please book your place now with Addington. Sponsorship opportunities remain available for those companies and breed societies interested in participating.

Howard Venters
Publisher
Cattle breeding people

James Hallett has been appointed by Cogent Breeding Ltd as General Manager for the UK business. This is a new position for Cogent and underpins their commitment to delivering high quality solutions to their growing base of UK customers. He will be responsible for the strategic direction and operation of the UK business, ensuring that customers receive the best performing product and enhanced services.

James farms in Shropshire where he is steadily building a herd of pedigree Salers cattle. His career has been in commercial management in a number agricultural and horticultural businesses, including Geest plc, Homegrown, Fresca, British Growers Association and most recently Agri Lloyd.

The Highland Cattle Society is on the hunt for a new secretary. This follows the decision by current secretary Hazel Baxter to stand down from the role in September. “I have been in the role for nearly eight years and overseen many great times within the Highland Cattle world including the Highland International Gathering with over 150 visitors from overseas, developed international trade and relations from countries such as Estonia, Switzerland and Italy, office moves and more,” she said. “I am ready to move onto some new challenges.”

Meanwhile, the Aberdeen Angus Cattle Society has appointed Johnny Mackey as their new chief executive. He will take over from Ron Mc Hattie who is retiring later this year. Mr Mackey is currently QMS head of industry development.

Assistant Breed Secretary, Neil Caul will take on the role of Breed Services Manager.

The position of breed secretary, which will require the successful applicant to be based in Stirling, is now being advertised. The society says it is looking for someone to “be the public face of the society and ensure smooth running of the office”.

John Hall of Dalston, Carlisle, Cumbria has been elected President of the British Blue Cattle Society. He farms at Inglewood Edge, with his daughter Joanne and brother, Peter, along with their respective wives Mary and Elizabeth.

The holding, comprising of approximately 1000 acres carries 2000 Beltex X ewes and a herd of 120 Limousin-cross, suckler cows, all being put to British Blue bulls. John has been a staunch supporter of the ‘Blue’ since their importation into the UK, buying his first bull 25 years ago. He is also current President of the Beltex Sheep Society.

Geoff Ryb, (right) of the Stonehills herd, Bridlington, East Yorkshire, has been elected president of the Beef Shorthorn Society and Sally Horrell, Pode Hole herd, Thorney, Peterborough vice president. Cathryn Williamson and Danny Wyllie were elected directors to represent North of Scotland and North England/Wales regions respectively.

“I’m thrilled to have the opportunity to champion the Beef Shorthorn, a functional suckler cow which market trends clearly demonstrate is meeting with requirements,” commented Geoff Ryb. “In addition, pure and crossbred Beef Shorthorn steers, previously a herd by-product now have an increased value thanks to Morrisons Traditional Beef Scheme, which leaves all breeders with the opportunity to select even more keenly for maternal traits, for milk and ease of calving.”
After an extraordinary fifteen year career at Genus ABS, the decision has been made to retire Picston Shottle from the active bull lineup; he leaves behind a significant legacy after producing 1,174,948 units of semen.

Picston Shottle had a major influence over the Holstein breed as an icon for dairy farmers around the globe. "Shottle captivated the dairy and AI industries for more than a decade, with strong characteristics such as semen fertility, production, low somatic cell counts, consistently pleasing type, and fantastic temperament. "These traits assisted him in becoming one of the greatest 'customer satisfaction' bulls of all time," explained Mark Smith, ABS global production director, at a birthday celebration for Shottle in July, 2014.

Shottle was born at Spot Acre Grange near Stafford, England, the home of the Pickford family and Picston Holsteins. He was the son of dam Condon Aero Sharon EX-91 and sire Carol Prelude Moto.

"He was the first UK bull to reach the magical milestone of one million doses of semen produced and sold. He consistently ranked high on the PLI and Type rankings regardless of age.

"Even today, he still stands at 2.28 Type Merit with over 18,000 UK daughters classified alone. He is widely seen as the bull that put UK genetics and breeding programmes on the worldwide map, sparking a huge increase in exports of UK genetics," comments David Guthrie, Dairy Product Manager.

Genus ABS remains the premier source for Shottle-influenced genetics, marketing conventional and sexed semen from 17 direct sons and 27 maternal grandsons. With 19 maternal grandsons awaiting proof information, Shottle will continue to influence the industry for years to come.

Not only was Shottle popular in the dairy and AI industries, but he received enormous amounts of press coverage from all over the world early on in his career. In addition to dairy trade publications, stories about Shottle appeared in numerous newspapers and magazines, including The Times of London and Daily Mail. Perhaps the most notable was his feature in Playboy magazine, a feat no other bull at Genus ABS has accomplished.

Throughout his retirement, Shottle can expect superstar treatment including the enjoyment of a pen twice the size of his herd mates where he can bask under heat lamps and get regular exercise from the dedicated team of stockmen at the Ruthin stud in the United Kingdom. Please join us in wishing Shottle a long and healthy retirement.
Dairy indexes show stability at the top

New genetic indexes for Holstein bulls (August) are the first under the new AHDB Dairy banner. The theme at the top of the proven sire ranking is one of stability, as Gen-I-Beq Lavaman holds convincingly on to his number one position with a Profitable Lifetime Index (PLI) of £615. Transmitting a correct balance of production which raises milk solids, together with good daughter fitness, this son of Man-O-Man, also breeds daughters which require less feed for maintenance than the breed average due to their smaller size. His Maintenance Index is -4.

A new entry in second place is De-Su Ransom whose early daughter information from the USA contributes to his PLI of £595. Ransom (Robust x Ramos) combines high lifespan (+0.7) and daughter Fertility Index (+10.3) with solid production. He pushes April’s number two sire, Prehen Omen, into third place, now with a PLI of £582. UK-bred Omen’s high milk solids and in particular protein per cent at +0.16 are noteworthy.

In fourth place we find Kings-Ransom Erdman, whose continuing improvement for daughter Lifespan Index sees him rank with the best of the breed for this trait at +0.7. He improves his PLI to £561.

The familiar name of Mainstream Manifold (PLI £535) features in fifth position, now with 1,760 UK daughters contributing to his figures. He is is closely followed by the second UK-bred sire in the top 10, Laurelhill Classic (PLI £530). Classic sees further gains to his Lifespan Index (now +0.6) and his impressive daughter Fertility Index (+15.8).

Climbing into the top 10 is a popular sire of sons who started his career as a high genomic young sire, Seagul-Bay Supersire. When it comes to milk and solids production, Supersire leads the rankings by a country mile, with 908kg milk, 37.2kg fat and 27.7kg protein. He manages to combine this with solid fitness figures resulting in a PLI of £527. Supersire shares seventh place with Beacon son, Roylane Flex. Flex improves his PLI thanks to gains to his daughter fertility and conformation traits.

With nearly 9,000 UK daughters now contributing to his production proof, Gran-J Oman McCormick ranks in ninth position (PLI £524). With a massive daughter Fertility Index of +19.5 he is also the breed leader for this trait.

Massey son No-Fla AltaEverglade rounds off the top 10 and firms up his former ranking with a PLI of £517.

New names

Other new names in the proven top 25 which have come through with daughter indexes having formerly been marketed as young genomic sires are: Rosylane-LLC AltaBarney (PLI £512); Genervations Latimer (PLI £497); Co-op RB Ober Indy (PLI £495); and Mr OCD Robust Donatello (PLI £494).

We look to 37th position to find the first UK-bred new entry which takes the shape of Denmire Merchandise, with a PLI of £468.

Remarking on the high calibre of the leading £PLI sires, Marco Winters, head of genetics for AHDB Dairy, comments on the broad pattern of production ranging from extremely high kg milk to high weight of solids.

“However, what they all have in common is superb daughter lifespans and fertility – something the £PLI was designed to deliver to the industry.

“Dairy producers are reminded that the £PLI has been developed with these aims in mind and therefore using this ranking to shortlist sires for use on farm is strongly advised,” he says.
Table 1: Top 20 Daughter-Proven Holstein Bulls Ranked On Profitable Lifetime Index (PLI) April 2014

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<th>Rank</th>
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AIS = AI Services; ALT = Alta; BUL = bullsemen.com; CBL = Cogent Breeding Ltd; DOV = Dovea; GEN = Genus ABS; GG = Global Genetics; MOL = Molecare; SMX = Semex; SRL = Sterling Sires; TAG = Trans-America Genetics; VIK = UK Viking Genetics; WFE = Western Farm Enterprises; PLI = Profitable Lifetime Index; FI = Fertility Index; LS = Lifespan Index; SCC = Somatic Cell Count Index; dCE% = direct Calving Ease; TM = Type Merit; G = Genomic information included.

Table 1: Top 20 Daughter-Proven Holstein Bulls Ranked On Profitable Lifetime Index (PLI) April 2014

Leader retains top position on £SCI

The Spring Calving Index (£SCI) has been a feature of the bull rankings for exactly a year, and during that time, the Danish Jersey bull, VJ Tester has stood resolutely in the lead. As AHDB Dairy publishes the indexes for August 2015, Tester further strengthens his grip with his transmission of high milk solids, high fertility and low maintenance which together earn him an SCI of £436.

These traits feature strongly in the £SCI which has been formulated specifically to assist herds which have a spring block-calving system and are targeting production of around 4,500kg/year. Second place features another Jersey bull with a similar range of qualities, in the shape of VJ Link, whose SCI is £405.

Moving up into third place is the British Friesian sire, Catlane Caleb (SCI £394) who now stands in fourth position, while rounding off the top five are the Holstein sire, Gen-I-Beq Lavaman with the Jersey, Danish DJ Holmer, each with an SCI of £380. Lavaman offers the highest production potential among the top £SCI bulls while Holmer scores for positive components and daughter fertility.

"The £SCI ranking is increasingly proving its worth for producers selecting genetics for grazing-based systems," says Marco Winters, head of genetics for AHDB Dairy. "It's also proving to be useful for those considering cross-breeding, as it is the only ranking in which one breed is compared directly against another. However, even within each breed there is significant genetic variation which means that farmers should be mindful of which bull they choose, both within and across breeds," he says.

Another big climber is VJ Hilario (SCI £385) who now stands in fourth position, while rounding off the top five are the Holstein sire, Gen-I-Beq Lavaman with the Jersey, Danish DJ Holmer, each with an SCI of £380. Lavaman offers the highest production potential among the top £SCI bulls while Holmer scores for positive components and daughter fertility.

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"However, even within each breed there is significant genetic variation which means that farmers should be mindful of which bull they choose, both within and across breeds," he says.

Full details of £SCI are on the AHDB Dairy website at dairy.ahdb.org.uk.
Genomic young sires now make up over 40 per cent of all black and white inseminations in the UK, so it’s little surprise to see the young sire list is a growing focus of dairy producers’ attention.

Leading the pack in the AHDB Dairy Profitable Lifetime Index ranking is the Canadian bred Sandy-Valley-I Penmanship who holds convincingly on to his number one position, some 66 £PLI points ahead of his closest rival. This Enforcer son from a Numero Uno dam transmits a remarkable combination of high production with outstanding daughter lifespan (+0.7) and fertility (+12.0), which sees his PLI continue to move upwards and now reach £743. With figures based largely on his own DNA (which always remains static) together with an element of his parents’ performance, it is the latter which has improved over the past few months.

Second ranking Stantons Checkers (Predestine x Freddie) is one of four newcomers to the top 10, making his debut with a PLI of £677, a particularly high percentage fat (+0.25%) and a high Lifespan Index (+0.7). He also scores favourably for maintenance (-2), indicating his progeny require less feed than average for their own maintenance and he is the highest type transmitter in the top 10.

Climbing to third is De-Su Firewall (PLI £669), another sire with an excellent maintenance index (-9), thanks to daughters which are slightly smaller than average. He combines this with solid production, low somatic cell counts (-25), high lifespan (+0.6) and good daughter fertility (+11.1).

The highest UK-bred sire and from a pure British cow family is Topcroft Pesky Trix who moves into fourth position with a PLI of £660. Featuring solid production and superb fitness, Trix is backed by a family which is chalking up high lifetime yields and maintaining its fertility. Bred by Tom Crawford in his Suffolk herd, Trix has the further attraction of being the first Pesky son to the market. He also weighs in with a Type Merit of 2.17.

Boardshop holds his PLI at £657 and shares fifth place with newcomer, Comestar Loic (Flame x Sudan), whose breeding pattern is notable for its high milk components. Also new in the top 10 are Apina Nadal in seventh and eighth-ranking De-Su Apex (PLI £652 and £648). Nadal, as a Rocky x Goliath, has a pedigree that’s somewhat different from the norm but comes from a family that has produced several high genomic animals already, including 24th ranking Norman. Apex’s pedigree (Cashcoin x Numero Uno) is more familiar and he is maternal half-brother to Battlecry in 20th position. Apex (PLI £648) has superb transmitting abilities for fitness traits, with very low daughter maintenance (-16), low SCCs (-32) and long lifespans (+0.7).

Rounding off the top 10 are De-Su Octavian (PLI £637) and Amax (PLI £630), who both featured in the top 10 in the last index run in April. Other new names to watch out for which fall just outside the top 10 are Sonray-Acres PRD Justice (Predestine x Man-O-Man), a bull transmitting good milk quality and low maintenance (-4) and with a PLI of £620; Sandy-Valley-I Picasso (full brother to Penmanship) and with a PLI of £619; and Bush-Bros JC Justify (Jacey x Denim) who is one of the best daughter fertility improvers in the top 25 (+12.6) and also has a PLI of £613.

“The quality of genetics in this August index run is undeniably high, so it comes as no surprise that young sires are growing in importance and popularity,” says Marco Winters, head of genetics for AHDB Dairy. “Farmers are certainly encouraged to use young sires which are capable of bringing qualities to their herds that are harder to come by amongst the daughter-proven sires, but they are always advised to choose their sires with care.

“It’s important not to forget that the reliability of these bulls is still lower than that of the daughter-proven bulls so I’d recommend choosing a group of sires – roughly choosing two young sires in the place of every one proven bull you would traditionally have used.”
Table 1: Top 20 Holstein Bulls With Genomic Indexes Ranked On Profitable Lifetime Index (£PLI) August 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>£PLI</th>
<th>Bull name</th>
<th>Genomic</th>
<th>£PLI Rel %</th>
<th>Milk Kg</th>
<th>Fat Kg</th>
<th>Ptn Kg</th>
<th>Fat %</th>
<th>Ptn %</th>
<th>SCC</th>
<th>LS</th>
<th>FI</th>
<th>dCE %</th>
<th>TM</th>
<th>Sire x maternal grandsire</th>
<th>Supplier</th>
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<tr>
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<td>743</td>
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<td>G 64 665</td>
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<td>Enforcer x Numero Uno</td>
<td>SMX</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Stantons Checkers</td>
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<td>Predestine x Freddie</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>657</td>
<td>Boardshop</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.20</td>
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<td>621</td>
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<td>12</td>
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Stable-mates share Friesian hotspot

Amongst the Profitable Lifetime Index rankings for the Frisian breed, it is two Catlane bulls which emerge as joint front-runners, as Catlane Caleb and Catlane Chad each has a PLI of £373. Although originating from the same Christine family, their closer pedigrees are quite different, as are their breeding patterns. Caleb is the highest milk components Frisian available with 0.3% fat and 0.14% protein and he also transmits good daughter fertility. In contrast, Chad transmits the highest weight of fat and protein in the Friesian breed, but has breed average daughter fertility.

New in number three position is Deangate Quaich (PLI £293) who displays a good all-round production and fitness profile. He is a Centurion son from a Hylke dam. The familiar appearances of Winnoch Umpire (PLI £286) and Raheenarran BCG Sochar (PLI £282) complete the top five.

Jerseys

The Jersey ranking is dominated by Danish breeding, led by Danish VJ Link, with a PLI of £467. His high daughter Fertility Index (+10.5) combined with solid production puts him ahead of second ranked Danish VJ Hilario. Hilario makes a new appearance in the top five thanks to improvements in his Lifespan Index (+0.3) while his daughter Fertility Index is +9.4 and overall PLI is £446. Danish DJ Holmer moves into third place while Danish DJ Lix rises through the ranking with additional UK daughters in his evaluations to earn a PLI of £390. In fifth is the high reliability and widely used Q Zik (PLI £357).
### Top five bulls for Non-Holstein breeds ranked on £PLI (August 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Jersey sire name</th>
<th>£PLI</th>
<th>Milk Kg</th>
<th>Fat Kg</th>
<th>Prot Kg</th>
<th>Fat %</th>
<th>Prot %</th>
<th>SCC</th>
<th>LS</th>
<th>FI</th>
<th>Legs</th>
<th>Udder</th>
<th>TM</th>
<th>Supplier</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>467 VJ Link</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>17.1</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>446 VJ Hilario</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>15.7</td>
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<td>390 DJ Lix</td>
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<th>Fat Kg</th>
<th>Prot Kg</th>
<th>Fat %</th>
<th>Prot %</th>
<th>SCC</th>
<th>LS</th>
<th>FI</th>
<th>dCE (%)</th>
<th>TM</th>
<th>Supplier</th>
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<th>Udder</th>
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For key, see Holstein table.

### Ayrshires
There is little change in the Ayrshire rankings with long-term front-runner, Gunnarstorp retaining his top position. He adds a handful of UK daughters for the first time and now has a PLI of £502. He owes this to a strong combination of production, fitness and type. In second place is Pell Pers (PLI £462) and climbing into the top three is VR Gunnarstorp Backen Gobel with a PLI of £447. As his name suggests, he is a son of the number one sire. His gains are largely due to a further improvement to his already high daughter Fertility Index, to make him the breed leader at +15.4.

### Other breeds
New leader for the Montbeliarde ranking is Diderot (PLI £329), while Huray retains his number one spot in the Brown Swiss rankings (PLI £431). The top Guernsey Merit Index sire is De Garis Bettys Bertie (GMI 379) and Skyhigh Oscar leads the Shorthorn breed (PLI £400). Finally, the leading Fleckvieh bull is Ricki (PLI £288).

### Comparison across breeds
“As always, it’s important to remember that the £PLI and its components should not be compared directly between breeds,” says Marco Winters, AHDB Dairy head of genetics. “The figures for each breed are calculated to relate to that breed average, so comparing figures across breeds would be both meaningless and potentially misleading.

“AHDB Dairy supplies specific conversion formulae for those who want to compare one breed with another for cross-breeding purposes,” he says. “Alternatively, those on a grazing-based, spring-calving system may prefer to use the Spring Calving Index (£SCI) which ranks bulls of all dairy breeds on the same list.”
A new dairybeef index is due out in the autumn, targeted at the increased numbers of dairy cows that will be producing beefing offspring in the coming years. The three main aims of the index will be to select bulls that provide short gestations, easy calvings, and calves with good beef characteristics, according to the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF) Andrew Cromie.

It also reflects an emerging trend in New Zealand where breeding programmes are actively trying to identify bulls with the shortest possible pregnancy periods. “There are some really significant differences emerging, with some Hereford bulls in particular able to throw calves up to two weeks earlier than industry averages,” he said.

The trait had become particularly important in New Zealand since Fonterra clamped down on the practice of farmers artificially inducing their late calving cows to abort before they reached full term.

“It’s a really heritable trait that results in easier calving and the cows coming back into milk faster,” added Mr Cromie. The trend towards shorter gestation bulls is also emerging in Ireland, with Munster AI’s Doreen Corridan seeing an increase in interest from farmers.

“They’ve always been looking for it but there are more bulls available this year than in the past,” she said, noting that the use of beef sires within the dairy herd up 10 per cent again this year following a 10 per cent rise in 2014. In contrast, the interest in sexed semen has waned, with farmers wary of the lower fertility rates that result with the technology.

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The arrangement is designed to deliver a higher value calf crop for dairy farmers. BeefConnect, a new beef supply initiative launched by Genus ABS and ABP Food Group, involves farmers using Genus Aberdeen Angus beef sires on lower end dairy cows to produce beef-cross calves. The calves are collected by ABP at 10-35 days old and moved to a dedicated rearing unit through ABP’s beef production business Blade Farming.

The arrangement is designed to deliver a higher value calf crop for dairy farmers, better efficiencies from the beef supply chain and higher quality beef. Jocelyn Orr, Genus beef brand manager, said: “Participating farmers will benefit from more competitive prices and a simpler way of moving calves off farm whilst having access to top quality, mainly British bred sires.”

Richard Phelps, ABP UK’s group agriculture director, said: “ABP will provide Genus with information on animal performance and other factors that affect price and margin for beef finishers. Currently, this data is lost and this is hampering efforts to improve efficiency.”

Genus will use the data to make better bull selection decisions, ultimately allowing beef farmers to select sires with better growth performance and carcass quality; factors which have the potential to improve the efficiency and profitability of beef finishing in Britain. BeefConnect is available in Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, with the intention to expand.

Statement from the Editor

An article was carried in Cattle Breeder in Spring 2015 about the new BVD vaccine from Boehringer Ingelheim called Bovela.

The article stated that Bovela® could be used “whether pregnant or not” and that it is a “unique one-shot vaccine” followed by the statement that “Other currently available vaccines require a two-dose primary course with boosters”. These statements require further qualification.

In order to provide protection of the foetus from day one of conception, Bovela should be administered for the first time at least three weeks before pregnancy and thereafter boosted every 12 months. The information sheet (SPC) also states that Bovela should be used during pregnancy “on a case-by-case basis decided by the responsible veterinarian…”

The company apologises for any confusion caused and advises that farmers should consult their veterinary surgeon for further information.
A change of breed has transformed performance, lifestyle and profit for Ulster suckler beef farmers Billy O’Kane and his wife Liz, who run a herd of 150 Stabiliser suckler cows near Ballymena.

Indeed their outstanding herd performance won this Co Antrim family the prestigious Farmer’s Weekly UK Beef Farmer of the Year award in 2014.

A qualified vet, Billy has concentrated his entire efforts on farming for the past ten years. He also runs a flock of 1,000 Romney sheep as a separate enterprise.

The herd was originally a mixture of Charolais, Limousin and British Blue cows crossed with a terminal continental sire. The male progeny were finished as bulls at 16 months and the heifers were finished at 20 months. By any standards, the herd performance was excellent with 83 calves weaned per 100 cows, compared to an average of 73 in England and 79 in N Ireland.

“But the financial returns were unsustainable. It was difficult to meet target finishing times. The level of calving difficulty was high and the temperament of the cows was poor. Liz lived in permanent fear that I wouldn’t come back safely after dealing with a mad cow calving,” said Billy.

Stabilisers
During the past decade he has switched to Stabilisers – an American four way cross of Hereford, Angus, Simmental and Gelbvieh, a hardy German breed with a very good temperament. The cows are smaller and are bred for fertility, longevity and milk yield.

By carefully selecting easy-calving bulls that carry maternal production values within the top five per cent of the breed, Billy has reduced the number of assisted calvings to just two per cent, compared to 20 per cent for the continental cross cows.

“In close on 1,000 births in the last six years, we have lost just two calves and these could have been saved if we were present at calving,” he said.

Performance
The lighter cows – 610kg versus 740kg for the continental crosses – have enabled a 15 per cent increase in cow numbers/hectare. The herd has a conception rate of 98 per cent over a twelve week service period. Calving interval has been reduced from 391 to 361 days and the number of calves reared per 100 cows has increased from 83 to 96.

“The progeny have better growth rate and food conversion efficiency resulting in animals being finished faster. This has led to a reduction of 20 per cent in concentrate usage – a saving of approx. £80/cow calf unit.

“A recent batch of seven purebred Stabiliser bulls I sent to ABP Lurgan killed out U 3/4L and averaged 361kg at just 13 months and five days old with less than a tonne of concentrate fed per bull,” added Billy.

Replacement heifers calve at 24 months. He maintains this adds an extra margin of £50/cow for every year of her production, compared to three-year old calving.

Overall, the switch to Stabilisers has given an increase of over 30 per cent in kilos weaned/hectare and a substantial increase in profit. Net margin in 2012, 2013 and 2014 was £240/cow – before Single Farm Payment and paying Billy and Liz a moderate wage.

Award winning suckler herd owner Billy O’Kane has the practical experience, plus the facts and figures, to show that switching to Stabiliser cattle makes sound business sense.
Superb grassland management is a cornerstone of the O’Kane farming system. Calving is arranged to coincide with the onset of grass growth. Emphasis is placed on reseeding and inclusion of clover in the sward and grass cover is measured every week.

Up to 25 Stabiliser breeding bulls are sold from the O’Kane herd every year. There is also a strong trade for replacement heifers. And Billy provides nutritional and herd health advice to his farmer customers on exploiting the benefits of Stabilisers.

Animal Health

Nowhere is attention to detail more obvious than in animal health. Billy O’Kane is a firm believer in the importance of disease prevention and operates a rigid vaccination programme.

To protect against BVD, all cows and replacement heifers are vaccinated with Bovilis BVD. Vaccination with Leptavoid H to protect against both strains of leptospirosis is regarded as an annual imperative. Cows are also vaccinated between 12 and three weeks before calving to protect against calf scour by maximising the likelihood that calves get the necessary antibodies in colostrum.

Calves receive a primary shot of Bovipast RSP at two weeks of age to protect against pasteurella pneumonia caused by Mannheimia Haemolytica and two of the main pneumonia causing viruses, RSV and PI3. Bovilis IBR Marker Live, the vaccine that protects against IBR, is given at the same time as the shot of Bovipast RSP. A booster shot of Bovipast RSP is given four weeks later.

Calves are also vaccinated with Bravoxin 10 to protect against the main clostridial diseases. As coccidiosis is an issue on the farm, calves receive a preventative treatment to control this.

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If so, we would like to hear from you so that we can add your name to our mailing list for Sheep Breeder, another specialist quarterly Shepherd Publishing title serving the livestock industry. Sheep Breeder is available free of charge to all pedigree and commercial sheep farmers and others involved in the industry. To order your regular free copy please telephone the Shepherd Publishing office or send your name, address including post code, telephone number and email address to:

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Beef Shorthorn resurgence

The Beef Shorthorn Society has reported another record uptake. Registrations were up 41 per cent in the last five years.

Beef Shorthorn is undoubtedly enjoying resurgence thanks to breeders’ efforts to deliver a functional suckler cow that is right on song together with support from Morrisons, writes breed society secretary, Frank Milnes.

The Beef Shorthorn Society has reported another record uptake. Registrations were up 41 per cent in the last five years, and the trend continues with the rolling 12 month average at 3,565; furthermore, membership rose 30 per cent to 742 during the same period.

The society’s trends are mirrored in recent BCMS data which shows a 40 per cent increase in Beef Shorthorn and Beef Short-horn cross registered cattle since 2008, the largest increase of any breed.

Pedigree sales also hit all-time high for the fifth consecutive year with a record top of 17,000gn together with record averages for both bulls and females at £5,457 and £2,725 respectively.

Beef Shorthorn is a really exciting place to be right now quite simply because suckler producers are seeking a functional cow following radical changes to the dairy gene pool from which they had traditionally sourced their herd replacements, and the breed is able to meet that exceptional demand.

Added to that is Morrisons Traditional Beef scheme which has certainly strengthened trade for Beef Shorthorn sired finished steers that previously were a by-product.

Focused selection

Successfully delivering to meet demand is no mean feat of achievement but attributed to breeders who have adopted a very focused approach to their selection criteria for more than two decades.

Beef Shorthorn was among the leading native beef breeds until they came under increasing pressure with the invasion of the Continentals throughout the 1960s and 1970s in response to farmer demand for larger framed, higher performance animals and consumer demand for lean meat.

The number of registered cattle dwindled to the extent the Beef Shorthorn was introduced to the Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) list which in itself was a call to action.

Breeders began to introduce new genetics in an attempt to improve muscling and scale, whilst at the same time retaining the Beef Shorthorn’s native characteristics – hardiness, easy care and low input requirements.

Breedplan

By 2004, registered cattle numbers had grown to the extent, the breed was removed from the RBST list, a milestone which was marked by the society introducing ABRI Breedplan as its performance recording register.

Initial emphasis was on terminal sire traits – growth rates and carcase characteristics, however shortly afterwards the society committed to developing the Beef Shorthorn breed as a damline by introducing Self Replacing Index (SRI), the indices to

Last but certainly by no means least, Morrisons’ approach to the society is literally the icing on the cake.
evaluate maternal traits including milkiness, calving ease and gestation length.

Today almost 20 per cent of its 500 registered herds have embraced ABRI Breedplan performance recording and the trend persists.

**Maternal Index**

Our proactive approach is continuing. This year we are planning to introduce a new genetic maternal index, we are launching an inaugural young bull promotion scheme offering breeders the opportunity for rapid genetic progress and improved connectivity for maternal traits, and we will also be rolling out a study among commercial producers to define more clearly Beef Shorthorn suckler cow efficiency.

We are also enjoying the show and sale ring limelight, and already had a memorable start to the year. Our patron, HRH the Princess Royal accepted our invitation in February to Stirling bull sales which marked the 150th anniversary of the Perth fixture that recorded a Beef Shorthorn as the first bull through the ring sold. The breed took interbreed award at the Balmoral and Devon County, and we won the top award for our stand at BeefExpo.

**Morrisons**

Last but certainly by no means least, Morrisons’ approach to the society is literally the icing on the cake. All finished cattle sired by a registered Beef Shorthorn bull are eligible for its Traditional Beef Scheme until numbers grow sufficiently when it plans to launch a sole Beef Shorthorn brand.

As previously mentioned, the marketing initiative has been a major boost in helping to fuel demand for steers in the store ring. Last year it brought rewards; 98 per cent of finished throughput met the specification and were awarded a premium.

Morrisons confidence and commitment to the breed continues from offering free membership and five free registrations to all new members during 2015 to introducing a pedigree Beef Shorthorn herd at the Dumfries House Estate, Cumnock where the retailer has developed a unique collaboration with one of The Prince of Wales’ charities, which saved the property for the nation.

Beef Shorthorn is supporting “A Celebration of British Livestock at Christmas”. The society is providing a heifer to feature at St Bride’s Church, Fleet Street prior to which she will make an escorted walk through the city.
The Addington Fund

The Addington Fund is very proud to be associated with the exciting new concept of “A celebration of British Livestock at Christmas”

The Addington Fund was originally set up in 2000 to support the East Anglian pig farming community dealing with the outbreak of Classical Swine Fever. The Fund was the inspiration of Canon Richard Addington, which continues to carry his name and uphold his principles.

Following the completion of Richard’s initial work his charity went into abeyance until 2001 when the then Archbishop of Canterbury wanted the church to respond to the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease. Since then the Fund has responded to several animal disease and weather related situations, the latest being the serious flooding on the Somerset Levels.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the farming community, across the United Kingdom, for the support they have given Addington to assist the flood affected farmers in Somerset. It is at times like this that the farming industry excels itself; it has been very humbling for us to receive so much generosity in offers of feeding stuffs and straw, loan of machinery, free haulage and an enormous amount of fund-raising. The return to

‘normal’ in situations like the Levels can be painstakingly slow; deliveries of fodder have continued up until the first week of March and we will continue to support a few vulnerable families, who were badly affected by the flooding, but have other problems to deal with too.

Through the work of our Strategic Rural Housing Scheme we continue to meet farmers, mainly in the tenanted sector who have done nothing wrong. They have worked hard, led a very modest lifestyle and done incredibly well to have saved a significant amount of capital towards their retirement. What they could never have envisaged was the current high level of prices of rural properties. 56 per cent of our tenants have a share of equity in their homes, which we think adds to the dignity of their retirement. We are very aware that leaving a farm is like a bereavement and it can take quite some time to come to terms with the change; but with a degree of choice of where to live there is a ‘new season’ and an enjoyable future.

A pleasing aspect of our housing work is that through helping the older generation to retire we are creating opportunities for young people to enter the industry. We have possibly the best educated and most able next generation of farmers searching for opportunities to get into the industry. I have long held the belief that the biggest barrier to movement within the industry is the cost of housing and we must do more to increase the availability of housing at both ends of the age spectrum.

All the proceeds received from ‘A Celebration of British Livestock at Christmas’ will reach the livestock farmers we support. Addington aims to generate sufficient income from our own resources to cover all our day-to-day running costs, allowing donations to directly reach our farming families.

Ian Bell
Chief Executive

www.addingtonfund.org.uk
https://twitter.com/AddingtonFund
A Celebration of British Livestock at Christmas  
In support of the Addington Fund

3rd December 2015

Service to be held at St Bride’s Church, Fleet Street, London, commencing at 11:00am, followed by a champagne reception and lunch at Stationers’ Hall.

For further information please contact either:
Shepherd Publishing on 01684 565533
info@shepherdpublishing.co.uk

or, The Addington Fund on 01926 620135
events@addingtonfund.org.uk.

An event organised by Shepherd Publishing
Established as one of the world’s largest livestock shows, the Sommet de L’élevage (“Livestock Summit” in English), to be held on October 7-9 in Clermont-Ferrand in France, each year attracts more and more livestock professionals.

In 2015, it is estimated that more than 85,000 visitors, including 4,000 from abroad, will be present at the exhibition.

The Sommet de L’élevage is also an event well known for the quality of its business contacts. With its 1,300 exhibitors, the Sommet presents the full commercial agricultural spectrum including livestock handling equipment, animal feed, veterinary products, milking and other farm machinery, etc.

Located in the heart of the Massif Central, in the largest beef cattle breeding region in Europe, the Sommet is a business forum primarily devoted to showing animals. In 2015, more than 2,000 animals of high genetic value will be present at the show (22 cattle breeds, 26 sheep breeds, 16 horse breeds, etc.).

The Limousin breed will organize its national competition with its 400 best animals on show.

The International Business Club, a dedicated 300 m² host centre space will be provided for the convenience of all international delegations, with a team of professionals on-hand to guide them around the show, help organize business meetings with exhibitors, etc.

Every effort is made to provide VIP treatment for international visitors: free entry to the show, an accommodation bookings centre, free shuttle links to town centre, student interpreters, and more.

Excellent tours of farms and agribusiness technical units are lined up for international visitors. These 35 highly professional tours, complete with technicians and interpreters, are a big success every year, offering the delegations a golden opportunity to discover the outstanding quality of the French breeding sector as a whole. The 2015 farm tour schedule features beef and dairy breed farms, sheep and goat farms, a slaughterhouse, a cattle export centre, a meat industry research centre, and more.

More information on www.sommet-elevage.fr/en, email: info@sommet-elevage.fr, Tel: +33 4 73 28 95 13
There is still 5 months to go, but this 24th edition is already shaping up as a classic: the exhibition site looks like a sell-out with nearly 90% of exhibitor registrations already in, the National Limousin best-of-breed competition promises to be a top-flight event, and international delegations are readying to flock to the Sommet in numbers.

In order to host a record number of exhibitors, the exhibition floorspace has been reconfigured to add an extra 5,000 m² of floorspace compared to last year, with another 25,000 m² of facility space promised for 2016 by site owners the Auvergne Regional Council.

The Sommet is thus moving to further confirm its position as leading European forum for livestock professionals, readying to host up to 86,000 attendees over the 3-day event.

175,000 m² of showcase space for livestock professionals!
The Sommet de L’élevage has progressively grown to become a benchmark among the largest international trade shows dedicated to livestock production, pulling in more and more visitors every year. 2014 footfall figures clocked 85,000 visitors, including 4,000 international visitors from 70 countries (+11% against 2013), breaking new attendance records.

The Sommet is part business hub, part community forum for exchanging news and views—a brand that is synonymous with top-quality sales leads. Note that with over 1,300 exhibitors running stands, including nearly 300 businesses from 30 different countries worldwide, the Sommet delivers a full package of solutions for every link in the livestock farming value chain, from feeds and veterinary products to animal husbandry equipment, dairying equipment, agricultural machinery, renewable energies, and more.

An exceptional showcase for the world’s top breeds
Set deep in central France, at the heart of the biggest area of natural grassland in Europe, the Sommet de L’élevage is an exceptional showcase for French knowhow in livestock breeding and breed genetics.

With 2,000 animals on show, the Sommet is the leading international beef cattle sector trade show as well as the leading national forum for French dairy breeders in rugged uplands and mountain zones.

The sheep sector, with 400 animals on show, is also gaining stature, while the goat sector will be showing a number of specimens for the second year in a row.

Finally, with a total of 300 horses from 16 breeds, the Sommet remains the largest French gathering of draught horses.

National Limousin cattle championships
In the wake of resounding successes marking the 2004 and 2011 events, the Limousin breed is back at the Sommet for another national show headlining this 24th edition, where the line-up will feature 400 elite specimens in competition, and where an auction will also be held.

The Concours National – French national best-of-breed competition – is the biggest gathering of elite Limousin cattle in the world, making it a major headline event. The Concours usually draws competitors from over 200 farms in 35 different départements, making the ‘National’ a huge event for Limousin breeders across France – and abroad too, given how many international delegations have already booked places ringside. Over the 3 half-days allocated to the event, visitors will get to witness first-hand the work of the best French breeders as they show animals boasting excellent genetic merit.

Livestock showings – the 2015 programme
Year-in-year-out, the Sommet hosts the very best of what French and European livestock has to offer.

The cattle, sheep and horse arenas will be buzzing with 2,000 specimens on show over the 3-day event.
Copper deficiency – what to do?

Copper deficiency can occur due to low copper in the diet – or if high levels of antagonists or binders are being consumed.

Copasure® and Copinox® copper oxide needles, both manufactured by Animax Ltd, are the only such products with medicinal claims for copper deficiency, both primary and also secondary, in other words caused by a molybdenum/sulphur overload, known as molybdenosis.

Animax veterinary surgeon, Dr Elizabeth Berry, said copper is a necessary part of many vital enzymes, formed within the body tissues. The effects of deficiency are therefore severe, and varied. Livestock can experience poor growth, infertility, loss of coat colour, incoordination, bone fractures and diarrhoea.

Important advice on the most safe and effective means of administering this vital trace element is being issued to farmers following misleading claims relating to livestock copper supplementation, to the effect that only copper which is soluble in the rumen is effective.

Copper deficiency can occur due to low copper in the diet – or if high levels of antagonists or binders are being consumed. Two such antagonists are molybdenum and sulphur, which form compounds called thiomolybdate in the rumen and have adverse effects, as does excessive iron intake. Antagonists bind with copper to form an insoluble material, passed in the faeces. So, both the copper (beneficial) and the binder (harmful) are lost.

Thiomolybdate not bound with copper in the gut may be absorbed, and will then interfere to prevent copper forming essential enzymes within the cells. To prevent this, copper levels should be increased, in tissues, tissue fluid, blood and liver stores. This means that more copper has to be absorbed from the gut.

However, too much copper is toxic and will poison animals. High levels of soluble copper in feed or minerals can be dangerous and do not allow good control of how much copper is absorbed.

Fortunately, copper does not need to be given as rumen-soluble copper – other forms are fully effective and allow good control. Treatment of copper deficiency or molybdenosis can be done with copper injections, copper oxide needles in capsules or boluses or with copper-releasing rumen boluses.

Let us examine the options:

**Injections**
- Well known to be effective in copper deficiency and molybdenosis
- Provide no rumen-soluble copper, but are effective
- Short-term effect (about one month) with risks of injection-site abscesses
- Copper toxicity can be an issue

**Copper releasing rumen boluses – eroding or dissolving**
- Eroding boluses
  - Release either soluble or insoluble copper
  - Variable results
B. Dissolving boluses (e.g. glass boluses)
- Rumen-soluble copper which binds with thiomolybdate antagonist in the rumen
- Any unbound copper can be absorbed into the bloodstream to be used in enzyme production

Copper oxide needles
Copasure® and Copinox®, backed up by 30 years of international use in areas with high molybdenum and sulphur, work by needles passing slowly through the rumen and, in the abomasum, forming a soluble copper salt which is absorbed from the intestine into the blood. “This means copper can act in body tissues against any antagonists or binder,” said Dr Berry. “This provides adequate copper at the site needed in body tissues.” The mechanism of copper absorption and molybdenum/sulphur (thiomolybdate) antagonism is illustrated in the diagram.

Duration of copper elevation in cattle is up to eight months.

Toxicity is not an issue when using copper oxide needles alone. Said Dr Berry: “Animax produce the only medicinally licenced copper oxide needles - Copasure® and Copinox®. Any adverse reactions must therefore be reported, but there have been no cases of copper toxicity in ruminant cattle, in 31 years of production, now running at 70 tonnes per year.”

When farmers are contemplating which form of copper supplementation to employ, the results speak for themselves.

For example, Dr Clive Gay and colleagues compared growth rates of cattle on pasture containing extremely high levels of molybdenum and sulphur. Cattle were supplemented as follows:
A. Conventional free access mineral, containing soluble copper
B. Copper injections at 5-week intervals
C. Copper oxide needles, 25g*
D. Copper oxide needles, 50g*
*pre – UK market versions of Copasure®

Mean starting weight was 282kg. The trial ran from May to September, with the mineral (i.e. control) group gaining 500g per day. This gain was exceeded by 30.9% by the 5-weekly injected animals, and by 37.3% and 39.1% by the single 25g and 50g copper oxide needles groups respectively.

A further example, based on liver copper analyses ran over an 8 month period in grazing adult beef cattle. Liver levels in cattle receiving Copasure® remained 83.5% above controls, 8 months after a single administration.

The message from these trials is clear. Farmers looking for growth or fertility improvements in their livestock should consider replacing all other copper supplementation with a Copasure® or Copinox® programme. In sheep this is breed dependant - Copasure® or Copinox® should not be given to breeds of sheep susceptible to copper poisoning.

“Medicinal registration means that any suspect adverse reaction must be reported,” said Dr Berry. “We are able to say that we do not have a single documented case of copper toxicity in ruminating cattle resulting from the use of our products, and the small number of suspected cases in sheep have been almost entirely associated with misuse of concentrate feed. To the best of our knowledge and belief, there is no safer product for copper supplementation.”
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As stock is turned out and this year’s breeding season gets underway, the calving pattern for next year is being set. It is a useful time to review the length of this year’s calving period and take steps to improve or maintain it, as required.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are a good way to benchmark figures in relation to calving year on year. A sensible starting point is to aim for a calving period of less than 12 weeks and then think about increasing the number of cows calving early in the season - e.g. target 65 per cent calving in the first three weeks.

Body condition and nutrition after calving are key determinants of fertility and how quickly a cow will get back in calf. Every effort should be made to minimise, and if possible avoid, body condition loss between cows calving and getting back in calf.

To achieve this the best grazing should be prioritised for the breeding herd, in particular for younger and thinner cows.

Research has shown that cows calving in moderate body condition start cycling one to two weeks sooner after calving compared to thin cows. For cows that calve in a less than ideal body condition (lower than 2.5), fertility can be improved by providing high levels of nutrition immediately after calving.

The nutrient demands of early lactation can almost double the energy requirements of a suckler cow compared to when she is dry. Milk yield peaks at around six weeks after calving, which coincides with the breeding season, so access to good quality grazing needs to be planned for cows and heifers being put to the bull.

Grazing
A plentiful supply of high quality grass is particularly important for heifers with their first calf at foot to ensure they get back in calf and keep growing. Good grazing is key to keeping the costs of production down as grass is the cheapest feed available.

In terms of grass growth, producers should aim for sward heights of 810cm.

In continuously stocked fields and be prepared to move cattle to new grazing if quality or quantity starts to decline.

A compact calving period will optimise the use of spring grass and make nearly every element of managing the herd easier. This is because the cows are at a similar stage of their production cycle and calves can be managed in bigger, more uniform batches.

In herds where the calving period is longer than desired then now is the time to take positive steps to shorten it. Make sure the bull is taken out of breeding groups on a planned date and consider selling later calving cows with calves at foot or keeping them in a separate group to be sold at weaning.

Similarly, scanning cows a few weeks after the bull is removed will identify empty cows, providing the opportunity to separate them from the main herd before being sold before next winter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calving period – first to last calf (weeks)</td>
<td>(Date of last calving – date of first calving) / 7</td>
<td>(05/03/14 – 28/05/14) / 7 = 12 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cows and heifers calving in first 3 weeks (%)</td>
<td>(Number of cows and heifers calved in first 3 weeks / (Number of cows put to the bull + Number of heifers put to the bull)) x 100</td>
<td>(60 / (100 + 15)) x 100 = 52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Johne’s disease can eat away at herd health, production and fertility, well before the problem becomes obvious on farm.

Little wonder, then, that it’s a disease that dairy producer Rhys Lougher wants to keep out of his family’s herd. He began testing his Bridgend-based herd for Johne’s, using NMR’s HerdWise quarterly testing, in 2009. “I wasn’t seeing a Johne’s problem in the herd, as such, but I was aware that it could become an issue and, more importantly, I wanted to prevent it from becoming a problem in my herd,” he says.

Rhys runs the herd in partnership with his wife Emma, his mother and father John and Liz, and grandparents Richard and Mary. It is one of the highest yielding in the UK.

Good health and fertility contribute to maximising its genetic potential – and milk production and Rhys is not about to allow disease to compromise that, particularly as pedigree sales are also an important part of the family-run business, which has also moved into bottling and selling its own milk direct to local customers. Rhys wants to work towards official accreditation that would declare his herd Johne’s disease free.
110-cow pedigree herd, which is currently averaging 11,653kg at 3.79% butterfat and 3.09% protein, to be free of some diseases and 'low risk' for Johne's. "And only regular testing and monitoring is going to take us down that road," he says.

Johne's disease is a chronic wasting disease caused by MAP infecting the gut. Increasing cattle movements, often prompted by restocking after disease outbreaks like TB and FMD or by herd expansion have fuelled the spread of this disease between herds.

And there has been more disease spread within herds due to management factors such as multiple calving yards and the feeding of waste milk and pooled colostrum to calves.

Reduced milk yield is one of the earliest signs of Johne's. This, combined with other associated signs such as a high cell counts and mastitis, and increased lameness through reduced immunity, make it an expensive disease.

Recommended protocols are in place at Tytanglwyst Farm, very much in line with the UK's National Johne's Management recommendations.

The herd has been completely closed for the past 20 years, which helps to reduce the risk of introducing Johne's.

Rhys then relies on the CHeCS (Cattle Health Certification Standards) accredited HerdWise screening programme, run by NMR and that uses his milk recording samples, to test the milk for Johne's disease antibodies once a quarter.

"Testing is a no brainer really. It requires no extra effort on our part – the test sample is taken during milk recording. It happens..."
Rhys automatically and I don’t have to worry about remembering to organise it. The results come through on Herd Companion and I discuss them with the vet – we work as a team on this.”

Even then, it’s usually good news for the Loughers. “We’ve had no ‘red’ cows for two years now, and just three or four ‘amber’ cows. I’d say that 95% of the herd is ‘green’ with no sign of Johne’s.”

Like many diseases, Johne’s requires routine testing or screening, according to NMR vet and technical group chair of the National Johne’s Action Group Karen Bond. “With Johne’s disease we see peaks and troughs of antibody production. Once an animal has tested positive then she is immediately on the radar, but those that test negative may still be infected and go positive at a future test. It’s vital that producers at least establish the status of their herd and to do this they need to test routinely.

Depending on the outcome, they can work out a control plan with their vet to prevent spread within their herd. Or, if they find no evidence of disease, then a good biosecurity and routine surveillance plan can maintain this status,” she says.

Rhys sees no need to panic if a cow tests positive or is flagged up as ‘red’. “It’s important to look at a cow over a period of time. She can still earn her keep so ‘red’ doesn’t mean an instant cull.

Immediate culling isn’t necessary as long as any test positive cow is identified and managed as a Johne’s risk, particularly at calving, and closely monitored for the onset of clinical signs to allow her to be culled for a decent price before she fades away.

And this is how Rhys operates now. “We calve red and amber cows outside, when we have any, and take the calf away immediately and throw away the mother’s colostrum. The calf is given colostrum from a ‘green’ cow. If we keep the cow separate from the calf and other cows at this time, the risk of spreading disease is minimised.”

He adds that a cow’s status can change from one test to the next, which is why continuous and regular testing is vital. The test results can be challenging to interpret, which is why it is essential producers seek advice from their vet.

“My results are tremendously low – and I want them to stay that way. That’s why I shall...
Rhys is keen to stress the importance of testing and controlling Johne’s in all dairy herds. “With the availability of a simple milk test for Johne’s there is really no excuse,” he adds. “To assume you have no Johne’s without checking properly is poor management.”

He adds that testing has also helped to add value to his stock. “It’s created a USP for us. Customers buy our stock because they know it’s being tested and monitored for disease. They can be confident that the risk of buying in disease from our herd is extremely low. And being able to use the milk recording sample means that this USP and added value comes with very little effort on our part.”

A number of milk buyers are incentivising regular Johne’s screening and offering 30-cow screening tests in conjunction with NMR. Producers can get details of Johne’s meetings being held around the country from their milk buyer. These are designed to increase their awareness of the disease and demonstrate control programmes.

Pedigree Limousin cattle, sold at official British Limousin Cattle Society (BLCS) auction sales in 2014, grossed £6,644,543 – up by almost £1 million on the 2013 figure. In the course of the 2014, seventeen collective sales were held at Carlisle, Stirling, Brecon, Dungannon, Ballymena and Aberdeen respectively to gross £3,733,364.

Official BLCS Breeders’ Sales, which comprise of Production, Reduction & Dispersal Sales, grossed a further £2,911,179 on behalf of 29 individual herds. Just under 1,900 animals were sold in all at pedigree Limousin sales in the year.

Commenting, BLCS Chairman John Phillips, Whitland, Carmarthenshire said: “These are terrific figures and reflective of the ongoing demand for the breed and the quality of the cattle being brought forward.

Fitting the bill
“The suckler men and the feeders are looking for performance and efficiency. They want easy-calving, cheap-to-keep, easy-managed cattle that are feed efficient, do well and hit the target weights and grades consistently. Limousins are fitting that bill.”

The seemingly insatiable year-on-year demand for Limousin females also showed no signs of slowing with the breeders’ sales in the year themselves grossing just shy of £3 Million and up by over £900,000.

Whilst the high-end of the trade in 2014 saw 56 animals in the year make 10,000gns or more, the highest proportion of bulls at the sales made between 2,000gns and 5,000gns.

Highlights of the Limousin sale year included the maiden heifer Glenrock Illusion from Stephen & Helen Illingworth, Lockerbie, Dumfries selling for a Limousin world record, and UK & European all-breeds record of 125,000gns. The highest price bull came in the form of the 55,000gns Aultside Hulk from Garry Patterson, Aultmore, Keith, Banffshire.
In 1995, Cogent Breeding had a vision to support British dairying and get the industry back on the global map. Now, 20 years later, the company continues to push the boundaries of farming by providing consistent genetic and technological improvements for customers.

Cogent were the pioneers in sexed semen technology, establishing themselves as market-leaders with a world-class UK breeding programme. This saw the beginning of a dedication to source the highest quality bovine genetics, including, the most comprehensive beef range available on the market today and the launch of the world’s number one genomic sire, Cogent Supershot.

Innes Drummond, Cogent’s UK Operations Manager said: “Cogent’s history is very much the history of farming and over the years we have worked with generations of farm businesses to ensure we have adapted to the needs of the changing industry.”

**Vision**

“Our vision has always been for the advancement of agriculture and we knew that the development of sexed semen was crucial for the industry to survive. It is this drive to continually develop, invest and reach the highest possible standards, from the welfare of our bulls to the latest technology, which ensures our customers get the best product.”

To mark the 20 year milestone, Cogent plans to celebrate with its customers in style. Throughout the coming year, Cogent will be making available offers and promotions as well as holding special events. Most importantly, their firm commitment remains in place and they will continue pushing the boundaries to improve beef and dairy genetics for UK farmers.
AFBI suckler cow project

AFBI – the AgriFood and Biosciences Institute – has launched a major new beef research project involving 1000 breeding cattle on 12 farms across Northern Ireland.

The project will evaluate the ability of novel breeding methods to improve the output from suckler herds in Northern Ireland. Funding is being provided by the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD) through a Research Challenge Fund grant, and AgriSearch in association with AI Services, Genus ABS and Zoetis.

This project follows on from a previous pilot study funded by AgriSearch, which evaluated the role of oestrus synchronisation and the use of artificial insemination (AI) in meeting breeding targets for suckler herds.

The new project aims to develop practical breeding strategies to enable suckler herds to calve heifers down at 24 months, with a subsequent calving interval of 365 days.

This compares with the current industry average of first calving at 31 months and a subsequent calving interval of 399 days.

The project will seek to devise and embed alternative management protocols for oestrus synchronisation and artificial insemination with high genetic merit sires in order to significantly improve the output from suckler herds in Northern Ireland.
Homegrown forage is the cheapest way to feed livestock and a robust high protein crop is extremely valuable to dairy and beef systems.

Lucerne (medicago sativa) is a high protein forage legume which can be used for silage and hay and can be extremely beneficial as a buffer feed in times when grazing may be in short supply, during dry summers and harsh winters. It is grown in large areas across the world, predominantly in the US, Europe and South America, where it is also known as Alfalfa.

**The Many Benefits of Lucerne**

**High Protein Content** – Lucerne’s high protein content increases milk and meat production and it can be a very useful compliment to high carbohydrate and fibre diets like maize. At around 20% protein, Lucerne can be a cheaper alternative to bought in protein like soya and has a higher level of protein than the average perennial ryegrass which is typically 6-8% lower than Lucerne.

**High Voluntary Intake** – It also has a high voluntary intake due to its good palatability which helps increase production. When we speak to farmers who regularly grow Lucerne we hear the same comments time and time again: ‘My stock do really well on Lucerne, they can’t get enough of it!’

**High Yield** – Lucerne provides 3 to 4 and sometimes even 5 cuts per year. It has a dry matter yield of 10-15 tonnes/ha, which is comparable to a good perennial ryegrass yield and it offers much better summer regrowth than grass or maize alternatives. It will persist for at least 4 years and in some cases has been known to continue production for up-to 5 or 6 years. It is extremely robust with exceptional drought resistance due to its deep roots which often reach deeper than 2 metres throughout the soil profile, which is ideal for dry land farms.

**Nitrogen Fixation** – The plant is leguminous, which means it can convert atmospheric nitrogen from the air into a resource that can be used to help the plant grow. This is done by a symbiotic association between the root nodules on the plant and soil bacteria called Rhizobium which ‘fix’ atmospheric nitrogen into the soil. Conservative estimates put the amount of nitrogen fixed in the soil at between 150-300 kg of N per hectare, to be used by the plant and potentially by subsequent crops. A healthy root nodule capable of fixing nitrogen is distinguished by its large size and reddish pink colour. They are usually active from spring to early autumn, when soil temperature is relatively warm.

To gain the most from the nitrogen fixation capabilities of Lucerne, the seed should be inoculated immediately prior to sowing, especially if this is the first time the plant has been grown in a particular field. Inoculation involves mixing the seed with a strain of bacteria necessary to make the right relationship between the plant and the soil and ensuring...
the correct strain of Rhizobium meliloti is present. A grainy inoculum powder is usually provided with the seeds.

Growing Lucerne – Pitfalls and Pointers
So with all these benefits, why is Lucerne not being grown more widely in the UK? It has a reputation for being a difficult crop to establish and grow in this country. However advances in varieties and farm machinery, as well as following some simple guidelines, mean these issues can be overcome.

Soil Type, PH and Temperature
The plant thrives on well drained lighter soils with a reasonable pH of 6.2 and above. However crops have been established on heavier soils, but these must have a free draining permeable subsoil, to stop water-logging. Poor drainage, compaction and acidic soils are Lucerne’s worst enemy.

Spring through to early summer is the recommended time for sowing a Lucerne crop. Warmer spring soils, above 8°C, aid the germination and establishment of seedlings. It is notoriously slow to grow in the first year so a late autumn sowing into cooling soils is not recommended. On poorer soils a robust sowing rate of 20 kg per hectare should be used.

Companion Species
The advantage of growing Lucerne as a pure stand is the availability of herbicides, products such as propyzamide and carbetamide, to control weeds. However, if Lucerne is under sown into a spring cereal, the cereal component acts as a nurse crop which helps establishment and can reduce weed competition. Priority should be given to the Lucerne crop and the cereal removed as soon as possible. Often the cereal will be taken for whole-crop silage, at the milky stage to allow the under sown Lucerne space and light to develop. If an under sowing is carried out the cereal seed rate should be reduced by 25 to 50%.

An alternative is to grow a mixture of Lucerne and grasses. Less aggressive grass species like meadow fescue and Timothy are often used and on occasions low levels of perennial ryegrass can be included with Lucerne. Cocksfoot can be a useful companion on particularly dry land, where the deepest roots possible are needed to access moisture.

The grasses are included at a low rate so that they do not outcompete the Lucerne. Companion grasses help to fill in the bottom of the sward, creating competition for weed seedlings. It can also increase yields and improve the overall sugar content of the crop making it easier to ensile. However due to the different seed sizes the species should be sown separately, with the Lucerne shallow drilled (max 1cm) and the companion grass broadcast on the surface and rolled in as one.

Harvesting
In the first year of establishment the crop should be cut rather than grazed, shortly after flowering, leaving a stubble height of roughly 10cm. The yield will be approximately 20-40 % of the full yield in year 2. Spring sown crops should be cut by the middle of August to allow adequate time to rebuild root

Homegrown forage is the cheapest way to feed livestock and a robust high protein crop is extremely valuable to dairy and beef systems.
reserves before winter arrives.

The harvest in subsequent years should be carried out when the plant is at the early flower bud stage which gives the best balance between yield and quality, which drops off after the flowers have opened. However, for the very first spring, cut at full flowering to allow reserves in the plant to fully develop.

After year 1 the crop is usually harvested around the second or third week of May. Subsequent cuts at 6 week intervals can be carried out with good regrowth occurring throughout the summer months. The last cut should be carried out 6 weeks before the end of the growing season, in the middle of October.

Typically Lucerne is not thought of as a grazing crop, as set stocking a Lucerne field for long periods of time can damage the plant crown, between the last leaf and soil surface. This can lead to moisture and rot affecting the health of the plant, causing it to die off. A brief graze may be beneficial at the end of the season if the crop is particularly leafy going into the winter, however it should be noted that bloat can be a risk when grazing a standing crop. The risk of bloat is almost entirely reduced once the crop is conserved into silage or hay.

**Making Silage and Hay**

A Lucerne crop will often be conserved into silage or hay for fodder later in the season. Traditionally it has been ensiled into the silage pit for over winter use. The characteristics of the plant mean that it has a low sugar content and high buffering capacity, which makes lowering the pH difficult. Lowering the pH is important to ensure the crop is properly fermented and is correctly preserved in the clamp or bale. A silage additive can help make this process more reliable. Big balers and wrappers have made silaging Lucerne into bales quicker and easier to handle, with less wastage than traditional clamp silage. Mower conditioners with crimpers can help speed up the wilting process, when making hay and silage. When wrapping big bales, it is useful to note that several layers of plastic should be used to reduce the chance of stems puncturing the wrapping.

Lucerne can also be made into hay, although this is a slightly trickier process than silage making. The stem takes longer to dry than the leaves, resulting in a higher leaf loss due to shattering if it is over dried or moved too many times. The crop should be turned when dew is on the ground and the leaves are less brittle and it should be moved gently, as few times as possible to reduce losses.

Although there can be several challenges to growing Lucerne the benefits of a high protein crop, with no reliance on artificial nitrogen and excellent drought resistance makes it a very profitable crop in the beef and dairy sector.

Recently it has been included in the ‘greening’ measures of the common agricultural policy. When sown as a pure stand it can be used as a pasture legume option under the crop diversification criteria and when sown as a mixture with a grass companion it’s listed as temporary grassland.

The many advantages of Lucerne may help to bring renewed interest in this ‘shrinking violet’ of UK livestock forage.
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Milking goat and beef farm sees benefit of homeopathy

One of the latest farmers attending the Homeopathy at Wellie Level (HAWL) course is already seeing the benefit of using homeopathy alongside conventional veterinary care.

The Beginnings
At Peppercorn Farm we are always looking to improve how we take care of our livestock. Historically we have taken the conventional route for our livestock veterinary needs. However, I am open minded to different health treatment approaches, not least in supporting my own wellbeing and that of my family.

A few years ago I heard about a farmer focussed course in homeopathy – the HAWL course. At the time I had just married into a family livestock farm, with a commercial goat herd and small suckler beef unit. As our children grew up I started spending more time with the farm business accounts and outdoors in the livestock sheds. I soon made the obvious connection that healthy stock equate to productive stock. Our girls have always been pretty healthy and productive but I realised there was an opportunity to do more, so I began to look at different ways of supporting their health and wellbeing, alongside conventional medicine.

So having been on the HAWL course mailing list for some time I finally managed to synchronise the dates, childcare and relief staff so that I could attend the three days of the course, held near Tetbury at Broadfield Farm, the farm of His Royal Highness The Prince Of Wales.

The HAWL Course & Homeopathy
The course gave me much more than I could have expected, not least in the quality and practicality of the teaching but for those of us attending some immediate wins for our livestock. We were a mixed group of shepherds, dairy farmers, young stock managers and mixed enterprise farmers mainly. Some were organic farmers and were seeking alternatives to antibiotics due to market pressure and milk export control, others were already using homeopathy but wanted to gain more confidence and knowledge.

I feel that to understand homeopathy you need to open your mind and think outside of the box. This was pretty easy for me having been successfully treated non-conventionally by reflexologists, AK practitioners and so on, but for some this mindset is a challenge to achieve at first. You do need to understand the main principles, which I reckon most livestock farmers can relate to though.

To give an example of one of these principles, think about what you notice when you observe your stock in the shed, field or barn. Something deep in your experience of years will tell you if an animal is not quite right. It will give off a number of messages to you without you probably realising it initially, until further on it becomes very unwell. These signals form part of one of the principles of homeopathy: Totality.

As farmers of livestock, we tend to be great observers. Is the animal looking a bit low, it is charging about wildly when normally it is placid, it is lying down when it normally stands to eat? You may be feeling the cold due to the sudden change in wind direction so you turn up the collar and head indoors without giving it much further thought.

When using homeopathy on the farm you need to engage the ‘gut instinct’ and listen to what it is saying. On the HAWL course we began to learn and see these signals, putting them into what homeopaths refer to as a Totality of Symptoms which could then be
used to help identify a remedy. The principles of the Single Remedy and Single Dose are harder to come round to, given our modern approach to repeated treatments and the fact that homeopathic remedies are diluted to infinitesimally small dozes. Given that many of the remedies find their origination in poisonous plants this is perhaps a good thing though (think Belladonna – Deadly Nightshade and Aconite – Monkshood).

Without going into all of the principles here, the principle that Like Cures Like is one I find really helpful. For example, Belladonna was used historically by ladies to make them appear much more strikingly beautiful by increasing pupil dilation by dilating the blood vessels, it having an affinity with the circulatory system. When given as a homeopathic remedy to an animal with dilated pupils, showing symptoms a fever with a red hot udder (perhaps mastitis) and wanting to kick you away, it may have a healing affect without the risk of poisoning. Helping the body to respond and begin to heal itself before the animal becomes acutely unwell.

These remedies can be very powerful as I and those of us on the HAWL course began to discover. Even after the first day of the course we were able to use some of the knowledge given and make a positive contribution to our farm animals.

Simple Treatments Positive Results
Here are a few scenarios where I have used homeopathy in our day to day livestock management since attending the HAWL course:

Our suckler cows calved in early spring indoors. Before we turned them out we wanted to carry out some calf castrations. We have experienced mixed success to using ring castration on our calves and so we opted to bring the vet in to do the job for us. The calves were still in the loose houses with their mums but had to be separated in order for the vet and us to work safely. Like any mother put in this situation the cows became agitated, so I used a spray dose of Aconite administered to each of the cows and calves noses to help them relax and calm. I took a dose too as I find handling cattle extremely stressful having seen my husband get squashed during TB testing. Positive result! The cows stopped bellowing and watched on or went off to eat. The calves felt more relaxed to touch and didn’t try to escape or wriggle when the vet carried out the castration. All the calves recovered well and are now turned out with their mums grazing and growing on well. We will definitely be using Aconite now for TB testing to help keep everyone, especially the cows, as relaxed as can be.

We tend to kid our goats from late winter into early Spring. Rather than instantly weaning our kids at a few days old, we move them with their mums into the milking shed from the kidding shed, and they stay there for about 5 weeks until they are large enough to be weaned onto a 100% solid ration. The plus with this method is growth rates on the kids but the downside is the

These remedies can be very powerful as I and those of us on the HAWL course began to discover.

To find out more go to www.hawl.co.uk

Homoeopathy at Wellie Level
Learn to use homoeopathy as part of your health management strategy

A conventional farmer from Devon reports “The course was excellent, inspiring, informative, thought provoking and challenging. The way the course is set up is brilliant. Different tutors for every section was great because it kept everything interesting and fresh.

The results we have already got from using remedies have been beyond my hopes. I thoroughly recommend this course to all farmers interested in: reducing antibiotic use, improving health outcomes, having more treatment options, saving money or simply seeing things more holistically.”

Next Courses
Thursday 17th September for Day 1, Day 2 Wednesday 30 Sept, and Day 3 Wednesday 14th Oct.

For application form see www.hawl.co.uk or ring 01666 841213
bond between mother and kid is generally much stronger. So at weaning point we administer each baby with a spray of Ignatia on the nose, and the mother gets a spray on the vulva (it works on all mucus membranes) when they come up for milking. We then see a much happier separation, with little pining and bleating. The growth rates don’t seem to be held back either as a result of the shock of separation.

Scours can be a problem with our nannies during the period when the starlings are clouding our skies (or filling our sheds) and during the period of change between Winter and Spring, when the days are warm but the nights are really cold, often with a bitter easterly wind. There are at least two possible causes to the scours here, and it can be difficult to immediately tell which one is affecting a particular animal. I don’t milk every day myself so I wanted something that would be easy for all the staff to use including the relief help, irrespective of the cause and without the need of a deep knowledge of all the remedies. I opted for a combination homeopathic scours remedy. The first time we used it we split those that needed treatment into conventional and homeopathic administration so that we could compare the treatments. Routinely we would use Vitamin B12 to treat our milking nannies, it worked well but with some slight drop back in production taking a day or so to get the dunging back to normal. Those we treated homoeopathically were better within hours, with less loss in milk production, if any. So we now use the homeopathic treatment – it’s a no brainer.

**Next Steps – Chronic Treatments**

These are a few of the immediate wins that I have experienced for acute and immediate situations on our farm already since attending the HAWL course in March and April. The treatment of chronic cases is a bigger challenge for me as it takes experience to identify the correct remedy, but I am learning more all the time and slowly getting there whilst building my confidence as I do.

Given the experience of the course and the fact that my farm vet is supportive to my use of homeopathy alongside conventional veterinary care, I can see new opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of our livestock and as such, the productivity of our business.

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Focus on health and fertility

Geno UK is giving even greater emphasis on health traits in an updated Total Merit Index (TMI) for the Norwegian Red breed. “Our revised TMI, that takes effect in June 2015, maintains its emphasis on health and fertility – a trend that has been established in the Norwegian Red breed for the past 30 years,” says Trygve Solberg, head geneticist at Geno.

While the weighting on production in the breeding programme remains unchanged at 28 per cent, that for diseases other than mastitis increases from two to four per cent. Now, in addition to ketosis, milk fever and retained placenta, the revised index for the Norwegian Red will also include traits reflecting fertility-related disorders such as the health of the cow at calving and heifer health.

“We expect to see production continue to increase but, with the new weightings, an even greater improvement in the breed’s health traits,” adds Trygve Solberg.

“The emphasis on udder conformation has also increased from 15 to 18 per cent to encourage suitable udder conformation for automated milking systems.”

With 40 per cent of cows milked through a robot, Norway leads the world in the proportion of cows milked through automatic systems. Most of the weighting within the udder index is now directed towards keeping the udder at the appropriate height and keeping the teats placed correctly for robotic systems.

### Beef performance

The emphasis on beef performance remains unchanged at six per cent and is targeted at producing fast carcass growth, good muscling and acceptable fat for slaughter in males at 15 to 18 months of age. The beef-related traits are positively correlated with health and fertility.

“The revised weightings for the Norwegian Red certainly meet the demands of the UK dairy industry – the breed’s health and fertility traits are already the envy of the global dairy industry,” adds Wes Bluhm, managing director of Geno UK. “UK producers are typically looking for improved health and fertility without compromising production.

“And many are appreciating the financial advantages of a herd of healthy, trouble-free cows that can produce high milk yields in a range of systems and that can also produce a valuable beef calf.”

### Weights for traits in the most recent and newly updated Norwegian Red Total Merit Index

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Previous weight (%)</th>
<th>Updated weight, June 2015 (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production (protein &amp; fat)</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Udder health (mastitis &amp; SCC)</td>
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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertility (cow &amp; heifer)</td>
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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udder conformation</td>
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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef (carcass growth, muscling &amp; fat)</td>
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More information: [www.geno-uk.com](http://www.geno-uk.com)

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**Norwegian Red sire Retain – a fine example of top health traits. He is in the top 10 of the breed for health, fertility and calving ease.**
As a large animal vet I believe in using the best scientific knowledge available and I also believe that knowledge is power for farmers and vets. In my opinion, a key role of a vet is providing farmers with the information they need to make informed decisions themselves. In the area of nutrition, this is particularly true. For decades, trace element nutrition has, on many farms, been treated with a more guess-work-led approach than a science-based approach. This will not yield the results a farmer will seek; in terms of his/her herd reaching their potential fertility and productivity.

As all UK dairy farmers know, maintaining optimum trace element status in cattle can mean the difference between a highly productive, healthy animal and an underperforming animal with health issues ranging from infertility to poor thrive and increased disease incidences. The net result is reduced profit for the farmer.

Let’s look at the issue of fertility for a moment. National dairy fertility is acknowledged to be deteriorating at a startling rate and it is estimated that for an average-performing 100-cow herd, poor fertility is costing £25,000 per year, or over 3.5p per litre, through fewer calves, excessive culling and additional veterinary costs. Facing such sobering numbers it is to be expected that farmers make the issue of ongoing fertility a priority, and while poor fertility is an issue with multi-factorial causes, nutrition is a critical element in this equation. My role is to help the farmer understand this critical element, so that he/she may leverage it to the benefit of their animals’ fertility, productivity and profitability.

Nutrition and Fertility
Farmers are aware that nutrition is one of many complex factors which plays a role in fertility. Copper in particular is vital. Enzymes in the blood which are required for the onset of oestrus are dependant on copper.

While very few animals in the UK suffer from primary copper deficiency (i.e. deficiency resulting from a lack of dietary copper), many animals suffer from secondary copper deficiency. This occurs when molybdenum and sulphur in the animal’s diet combine in the rumen to form a compound called thiomolybdate.

Thiomolybdate is extremely ‘copper hungry’. It binds with and uses up all of the copper in the rumen and, when there is no rumen-copper left, it will move into the bloodstream to use up the copper there, which is needed by the fertility enzymes. When this happens, the animal suffers from secondary copper deficiency (also known as molybdenum toxicity, copper lock, thiomolybdate toxicity and TMT) and fertility is impaired. To prevent this from happening, we simply need to ensure that there is an available form of copper supplied in the rumen.

Applying Science To Maintain Fertility and Prevent Secondary Copper Deficiency
Many farmers supplement cattle with copper boluses but fertility and productivity remain impaired. At first glance, it seems that the animals’ health is improving as the ginger coat returns to its former black and the ‘spectacles’ eyes are less prominent. However, frustratingly, there is no improvement in fertility.

This issue may occur when farmers use copper oxide boluses. Copper oxide is not available at the same pH as the rumen and therefore cannot prevent secondary copper deficiency. Only ionic copper, which is available at the same pH as the rumen, will be able to prevent the secondary copper deficiency which results in impaired fertility and also in impaired energy utilisation.

The only boluses which contain ionic copper are the Bimeda Cosecure and Coseicure soluble glass boluses. Coseicure boluses provide copper, cobalt and selenium. Coseicure boluses provide all these elements, plus additional iodine.

Applying Science Yields Results
Despite the claims of other boluses, Cosecure Cattle are the UK’s only licensed nutritional boluses, and they are a POM-VPS product. Furthermore, the claims made about the Cosecure and Coseicure Cattle boluses are backed up by independent trial work.

In a trial involving three commercial dairy herds, three types of copper and selenium-containing mineral supplements were investigated.

As cows on each farm were dried off, they were allocated to one of three treatment
groups and treated with either subcutaneous injections of copper and selenium, or two matrix intra-ruminal boluses, or two glass intra-ruminal boluses (Cosecure).

The trial found that there was a significant difference between the conception rates of the three groups.

The cows treated with the glass bolus (Cosecure), conceived at a rate of 1.8 times greater than those treated with the injection and a rate of 1.5 times greater than those treated with the matrix boluses.

Choosing Science Over Guesswork
The Cosecure and Coseicure boluses are the world’s only soluble glass boluses. This is significant as their soluble glass formulation allows them to supply exactly the same amount of trace elements every single day for up to six months, in the case of Cosecure, and five months for Coseicure. There are no peaks and troughs of supplementation, and no guesswork for the farmer.

Other Benefits
The Cosecure boluses supply rumen-available ionic cobalt and selenium in addition to ionic copper.

Selenium protects against White Muscle Disease, strengthens the immune system and is important for fertility.

Cobalt is essential for the optimum performance of Vitamin B12, which is vital for energy utilisation and growth.

Why is it important that the boluses also supply rumen-available cobalt?
Unlike cobalt-oxide boluses, the Cosecure boluses supply ionic cobalt which is rumen-available.

Bacteria in the rumen require cobalt in order to synthesize Vitamin B12. Vitamin B12 is vital for energy utilisation and productivity. The body has no capacity to store cobalt, so Cosecure’s ability to continually supply rumen-available cobalt for up to 6 months is ideal for improving cobalt supply and promoting health in cattle.

Any final comments?
I would just remind farmers that fertility, immunity, thrive and productivity are extremely complex issues with many causes and it is important to always consult a vet and understand your herd’s nutritional status before using any boluses, medicines or other nutritional products. For more information on the bolus range, contact your vet.

Bimeda manufacture and market the Cosecure bolus range and can be contacted on 01248 725 400.

Sources
1 Average NMR performance: Esslemont (personal communications 2010)
2 Effects of three types of trace element supplementation on the fertility of three commercial dairy herds, D.H. Black, N.P French
3 Cytochrome c oxidase, cu, ZN-superoxide dismutase, and ceruloplasmin activities in copper-deficient bovines, Cerone Sl, Sansinanea AS, Streitenberger SA, Garcia MC, Auza NJ.
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Cosecure Soluble Glass Cattle Boluses:
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- These elements are essential for ongoing health, productivity & fertility;
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For more information, contact your vet/animal health advisor or call Bimeda on 01248 725 400
The annual British Cattle Breeders’ Club Farm Walks were held in the South Lakes on a fabulous day at the end of June.

The lush grassland and superb stockmanship of the Park family’s dairy unit along with the Geldard family’s beef and sheep business put the spotlight on Cumbria’s reputation for exceptional cattle farming.

Both farms participate in Stewardship schemes to enhance the environment, and get close to their consumers by running a farm shop.

**Dairy crossbreeding**

John and Marjorie Park have been National Trust tenants at Low Sizergh Farm since 1980. Now it is son, Richard, who manages the 170 cow autumn calving dairy unit, while his sister, Alison, has responsibility for a farm-shop and tearoom which takes maximum advantage of their scenic location.

Since the turn of the century Richard Park has moved from a 10,000 litre Holstein herd, milked three times a day, to crossbreeding. Production is now 7,000 litres per cow, essentially from a Pro-Cross type cow (Holstein x Swedish Red x Montbeliarde), although there is some further experimentation with Jersey and Brown Swiss.

Unsurprisingly, milk quality is high at 4.44 per cent butterfat and 3.46 per cent protein. Most of the milk is sold to Dale Farm, although some is made into their own brand Kendal Creamy cheese and ice-cream for retail.

Cows are bred to make best use of forage, and attention to detail on the grassland management includes use of a plate metre to optimise grazing.

**Beef breeding**

John Geldard and his sons, Richard and Charles, have added value to their livestock enterprises through sales of breeding stock for many years.

The original pedigree Charolais cattle herd has been replaced by Stabilisers.

The 450 owned acres at Low Foulshaw, plus off-land, is now shared by 150 cows, plus 1000 Lleyn ewes and 120 pedigree Charolais sheep.

To generate cashflow when the farm was purchased in the late 1980s, a laying flock was established. Today the farm’s packing unit grades and markets one million eggs every week.

This enterprise provided a fascinating contrast to the ruminants. The rate of genetic progress, overall efficiency and tight business management made everyone recognise the untapped scope open to the cattle sector.

The move to Stabilisers has given a more fertile, easy calving, cow. Breeding heifers at a younger age helps moderate mature cow size. Males are either sold for breeding, or can be finished at 12 to 14 months of age from a high forage diet.

A trial batch of summer-housed cattle produced better returns than their grazing counterparts.

Even so, there is on-going debate in the family about employing such a system routinely.

**Discussion**

The day threw up some intense discussion about the merits of multiple breed crossing, compared with first generation-cross dams bred to a terminal sire.

In all instances the programmes have to be rejuvenated from a pure source. Currently it is the pedigree foundation stock which benefit, directly, from the era of genomics.

Cattle breeding is moving through fast evolving times, and breeders can continue the discussion and exchange of knowledge at the Club’s Conference in January 2016.

For more information please contact Heidi Bradbury on 07966 032079 or email heidi.bradbury@cattlebreeders.org.uk
Shepherd’s Boots and Merchandise

Shepherd Publishing is delighted to continue with our recent cooperation with K&T Footwear, leading suppliers of high quality shoes and boots who are this year celebrating their 53rd anniversary. This highly respected Northamptonshire company have been trading since 1962 and are suppliers of quality footwear including work boots, show footwear, farm boots, wellington boots, auction boots, dress boots, town and country boots, shepherds’ boots, City footwear, hunting boots, fell boots, mountain boots, hill boots and equestrian footwear. Many readers will know founding Director Ken Storey (pictured right) from many of the agricultural shows, livestock markets, sales and winter

R E Tricker are manufacturers of the highest quality shoes and boots, making handmade footwear in Northampton since 1829 and have been awarded a Royal Warrant by Appointment to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. Tricker’s Town & Country collection are bench-made by highly skilled craftsmen using only the highest quality materials. All styles are Goodyear welted, leather lined and have a leather in-sole. Goodyear welted footwear can be re-soled and refurbished thereby offering years of comfortable service. Tricker’s also manufacture a ladies country collection.

Henry Trickers Semi Brogue Dealer / Market Boots

- Colours: Burnished calf (pictured), espresso burnished calf (dark brown) and black calf leather uppers, Semi brogue dealer
- Market boot, Fully leather lined & leather insole
- Pull on tabs, Goodyear storm welted commando rubber stitched sole & heel
- Standard Fitting
- Sizes: 6-11 including half sizes, and 12 and 13
Price: £390.00 (inc VAT / P&P)

Malton / Trickers 7 Eyelet Brogue Boots (Commando Sole)

- C shade tan (pictured) gorse calf leather uppers, 7 Eyelet heavy brogue derby lace ankle boot, 1/2 bellows tongue
- Fully leather lined & leather insole, Pull on tabs, Goodyear storm welted commando stitched sole & heel
- Wide Fitting
- Options: Commando sole or leather sole. Also available with a leather sole and heel with half inch rubber heel tip
- Sizes: 6-11 including half sizes, and 12 and 13
Price: £390.00 (inc VAT / P&P)

Stow Trickers 7 Eyelet Full Brogue Lace Boots (Leather Sole)

- Colours: Espresso burnished, black calf, marron antique and acorn antique leather upper (pictured)
- 7 Eyelet heavy brogue derby ankle lace boot, 1/2 bellows tongue
- Fully leather lined & leather insole, Pull on tabs, Goodyear storm welted double leather stitched sole & heel with 1/2” rubber heel tip
- Standard fitting
- Sizes: 6-11 including half sizes, and 12 and 13
Price: £390.00 (inc VAT / P&P)

Such superior footwear should be regarded as a wise investment.

To order, call 01684 565533 or email info@shepherdpublishing.co.uk.
fairs and we are pleased to offer a bespoke service to all of our readers. All products available from our suppliers are invariably British made and of the highest quality including such well-known names as Loakes, Trickers and Alfred Sargent. All of the Town & Country collection are bench-made in Northamptonshire by highly skilled craftsmen using quality leathers and materials.

All styles are wide fitting and Goodyear storm welted with a variety of soles available. Bench-made Goodyear storm welted footwear can be re-soled and refurbished, thereby offering years of comfortable service. Such superior footwear should be regarded as a wise investment and we are pleased to offer a full range of styles and colours in a variety of sizes.

Loake shoe makers have been making Goodyear welted footwear since 1880 and were awarded a Royal Warrant by Appointment to the Queen in 2007. Loake’s town and country collection of boots and shoes are made in Kettering, Northamptonshire by highly skilled craftsmen using only the highest quality materials. All styles are Goodyear welted, leather lined and have a leather insole. Goodyear welted footwear can be re-soled and refurbished, thereby offering years of comfortable service. Such superior footwear should be regarded as a wise investment.

Newbury Loakes Dealer / Market Boots

- **Colour:** Tan burnished calf leather uppers
- Elasticated side panels, dealer / market boot, Pull on tabs
- Goodyear welted leather sole & heel. Fully leather lined, Leather insoles
- G fitting.
- **Sizes:** 6-13 including half sizes

Price: **£175.00** (inc VAT / P&P)

Thirsk Loakes Full Brogue Chelsea / Jodphur Boots

- **Colour:** Tan burnished calf leather uppers, Elasticated side panels, Pull on tabs, Fully leather lined, Leather insoles, Goodyear storm welted dainite rubber sole & heel
- F Fitting
- **Sizes:** 6-13 including half sizes

Price: **£220.00** (inc VAT / P&P)

Chester Loakes Full Brogue 5 Eyelet Lace Shoes

- **Colours:** Tan burnished calf, Mahogany burnished calf & Black calf leather uppers, 5 Eyelet full brogue lace shoe, Goodyear storm welted leather sole & heel
- Fully leather lined
- Leather insoles
- F Fitting
- Also available with Dainite rubber sole and heel
- **Sizes:** 6-13 including half sizes

Price: **£220.00** (inc VAT / P&P)

Welt sewing

The “welt” is a strip of leather that is stitched to the upper and the in-sole and to which the sole will also be stitched. The fact that welted shoes and boots are sown together, as opposed to glued, means that skilled craftsmen can dismantle and repair them.

To order, call 01684 565533 or email info@shepherdspublishing.co.uk.
Buckbootz Non-Safety BBZ5020 Boots now with K2 sole

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- Abrasion resistance - oil resistance
- Easy to clean, with detachable cushion insoles
- Sizes: 5-13 no half sizes
Price: £79.95 (inc VAT / P&P)

Buckshot BSH006BR Boots

- Colours: Dark Brown Crazy Horse Leather,
- Anti scuff toe safety boot
- Sizes: 6-13 no half sizes
Price: £82.95 (inc VAT / P&P)

Buckflex B1151SM Safety Boots

- Colour: Autumn Oak Leather
- Buckflex Dealer boot with Steel Toecap and Steel Midsole.
- Triple stitched seams and integral leather pull on loop.
- Heat and Oil Resistant sole
- Sizes: 6-13 no half sizes
Price: £82.95 (inc VAT / P&P)

X10R Fully Sprung Shepherd’s 10 Eyelet Fell Boots

- Colour: Blackwax kip leather shepherd’s boog, black (pictured)
- Traditional British made outdoor country footwear. Fully sprung.
- With long tab lace to toe design to maximise water resistance. Half bellows tongue. Made from reverse tanned waxed kip butt leather uppers which is ultra durable yet very flexible and comfortable when broken in
- Waxk kip leather
- Sizes: 6-12 no half sizes
Price: £195.00 (inc VAT / P&P)

To order any of those products listed within these pages, simply return the order form right. If you have any queries regarding any of these products simply email Shepherd’s Boots & Merchandise at info@shepherdpublishing.co.uk.
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All sheep skin rugs sold via these pages are sourced from British lambs up and down the country and we offer a chosen selection of natural white, dark, mottled or dyed skins. All skins go through a stringent eleven stage process from their original salting resulting in a lovely, warm, desirable, and popular product. Lovely to have on the lounge or bedroom floor! Lamb skins are naturally hard wearing, pleasant to the touch and can be washed as and when necessary. Treat yourself or buy one as a wonderful and unique gift for every occasion. Simply complete and return the order form within.

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★★ New: Jacob rugs now available (limited stock) £125 ★★

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Welcome to Cattle Breeder, a publication that has grown rapidly from our original newsletter created to promote the British Cattle Breeders Club, details of which you will find inside. Cattle Breeder is a quarterly publication and the next issue will be Autumn 2015.

Cattle Breeder is designed for all those interested and involved in cattle breeding, at whatever level, whatever the breed and whether it be beef or dairy related. All suggestions and proposals and editorial comments should be addressed to the Editor and we will be pleased to receive them.

Over the coming months we will continue to bring you a variety of topics covering many different breeds, breeding technologies, scientific innovation, political comment, overseas comparison and educational articles. Plus all the news, reviews and analysis of topical breeding issues from both the beef and dairy sectors.

If you are interested in breeding beef or dairy cattle, this is your publication – simply return the form below to register for your FREE subscription. There is NO cost to you. We hope you enjoy the publication.

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Store cattle (number) .....................................
Finishing cattle (number) .................................
Breed (Pure bred/Cross bred) Pedigree Y/N 

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Milking (number) ..................................................
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Breed (Pure bred/Cross bred) Pedigree Y/N 

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