

**CHAWG**  
Cattle Health and  
Welfare Group

**DairyCo**



**Dairy  
UK**



**holstein UK**  
holstein & british friesland

**NFU**

  
NFU Scotland

**RABDF**  
Working for British Dairy Farmers

  
Red Tractor  
Assurance for Farms  
Dairy Scheme

# Dairy Cow Welfare Strategy

Year 1 Progress  
Against Targets

September 2011

Annually the CHAWG reviews the targets to ensure they are relevant and reports on progress against the agreed targets. This summary provides a visual report on progress based on the first year of delivery by the sector.







**INDUSTRY PROGRESS TOWARDS AGREED TARGETS – ANNUAL REPORT – 2011**

	Action	Outcome	Organisations	Current situation	Target	Measure	
Better on-farm recording and use of aggregate data	Priority 1: Increase in the number of farmers recording production, health and welfare data	The benefit of understanding and recording production, health and welfare trends on-farm cannot be underestimated. Farmers should know the baseline situation on-farm to understand if, and how improvements can be made	NMR, CIS, NFU, DairyCo, RTA Dairy, Retailers, CDI, Breed Societies	No accurate information on number of farmers recording on-farm data	All dairy farmers recording the incidence of mastitis and lameness, and the reasons for culling as a minimum and aggregate data shared with industry	NMR data, CIS data, RTA Dairy data, BCM's data NFSCo data	
	Development of a national system to collate dairy cow welfare trends and measures	A centralised recording system for cattle health and welfare trends to allow industry to identify how the actions within the strategy are improving welfare	DairyCo, RTA Dairy, BCVA, VLA, NMR, Retailers, CDI, HUK	No central body for information collation	Data set analysed in 2011	Industry wide data set available	
	Priority 2: Mastitis: Improvement in recognition, treatment, prevention & control	Expansion of the DairyCo Mastitis Control Plan or similar	Increased number of veterinary surgeons and consultants trained on mastitis prevention, control and treatment	DairyCo, BCVA, BVA, Farmers, Breed Societies	146 people trained with 354 farms enrolled on scheme	750 farm plans by 2012	DairyCo data Other scheme data
	Priority 3: Lameness: Improvement in recognition, treatment, prevention & control	Develop and launch DairyCo Mobility programme	Veterinary surgeons, foot trimmers and farmers trained on lameness prevention, control and treatment	DairyCo, BCVA, BVA, Farmers, Breed Societies	Under development	2011 launch	DairyCo data Other scheme data
Understanding infertility	Priority 4: Lead an advisory campaign on understanding fertility problems	Ensure training and continued CPD of foot trimmers	DairyCo, NACFT	Website and training set up, 102 foot trimmers registered.	200 foot trimmers on NACFT website	NACFT website	
	Priority 5: Increased use of cow body condition scoring	More effective communication of current information and new research to farmers	BCVA, Breed Societies	No industry co-ordination of materials and key messages at present	Campaign / programme to be scoped and developed by 2012	BCVA, AI Companies, Other data sources	
Cow nutrition	Increased use of cow body condition scoring	Promotion of body condition scoring as a tool for measuring dairy cow welfare	DairyCo, RTA Dairy, BCVA, Retailers, Processors	Some retailers stipulate that farmers body condition score	10% of British dairy farmers regularly body condition scoring their herds	Retailer data RTA Dairy data DairyCo survey	
	Increased farmer guidance on feeding the modern dairy cow	Organise and promote industry workshops on feeding the dairy cow	DairyCo, Farmers, Consultants, BCVA	Certain events but variation regionally	10% of dairy farmers attending DairyCo Feeding + events by 2012 (or similar)	DairyCo data, Industry data	
	Ensuring conformance with RTA Dairy standards are maintained at all times	Corrective programmes developed for farmers who are non-compliant at RTA Dairy inspections	RTA Dairy, AFS, Certification Bodies, Dairy UK	Data on non-compliances and high risk farms available	Reduction in number of farmers classified as high risk by RTA Dairy	RTA Dairy standards	
Addressing welfare through Farm Assurance	Future standards to incorporate welfare outcome measures	Farm inspectors will be able to measure against more specific welfare standards	RTA Dairy, BCVA, RSPCA	Standards reviewed every 18 months	Incorporation of welfare outcomes measures in future review	RTA Dairy standards	
	Promoting breeding as a tool for improved welfare	Improve industry understanding, availability and use of genetic information for the benefit of dairy cow welfare	DairyCo, Breeding Societies, AI Companies	Information available through DairyCo Breeding+	All farmers aware of Breeding+	Increase number of knowledge transfer events on breeding	
Improving welfare through breeding programmes	Promotion of consumer facing website on British dairy farming	Proactive, factual and positive information available to consumers and heightened consumer awareness of the welfare standards achieved by British dairy farmers - www.thisisdairyfarming.com	DairyCo, The Dairy Council, Dairy UK, NFU	Consumer website launched	Websites promoted by all stakeholders	Cross-industry promotion	
	Consumer-facing dairy welfare literature and point of sale information	Retailers, processors and industry organisations should promote the current achievements of the British dairy sector to consumers	NFU, DairyCo, Retailers, Dairy UK, RSPCA	Very little positive literature of dairy cow welfare.	Improvement in consumer knowledge of dairy farming	The Dairy Council/ DairyCo Consumer Survey data	
Informing and educating the consumer	PR protocols for dairy farmers	Reflecting a positive and proactive message on dairy cow welfare to consumers and the general public	NFU, DairyCo	Best practice guidance given by NFU and DairyCo	Clear protocol in place for farmers and industry on dealing with welfare and other sector issues	Number of farmers attending training	
	Programme of welfare focused farm walks	Knowledge transfer events for dairy farmers to promote welfare best practice and communicate updates on dairy policy, regulation and initiatives	NFU, RABDE, DairyCo, Holstein UK	Not in place currently	Two briefing days annually in addition to current industry events	Two briefing days held	
	Farm Welfare Champions	Recognition of the good welfare standards already achieved by British dairy farmers	NFU, RABDE, DairyCo, Holstein UK	No welfare-specific visits	As required	Database of welfare champions	
Preparing for the future	Develop industry inventory on welfare activity	Bringing together all dairy cow welfare initiatives across Britain	CHAWG	No industry co-ordination	Annual report published	CHAWG report	
	One voice for dairy welfare	Endorsement of dairy cow welfare strategy and increased use of agreed "issue statements" that set the current scene for dairy cow production, health and welfare	DairyCo, NFU, Dairy UK, Processors, Retailers, Breed Societies	Welfare issue statements agreed	Issue statements to be reviewed regularly, and new issues identified	Positive media increased	
Priority 10: Industry co-ordination							

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## ◀ Key to progress chart:

Target column	Action column
 On target	 Dark: Begin work immediately and review progress in 2011
 More work to do	 Medium: Aim to be underway in 2011 and review progress in 2012
 Need to start activity	 Light: Ongoing aspiration to achieve lasting change in behaviour

# Introduction

This document is a summary of the progress made by the GB dairy sector in its quest for continually improving the welfare of the dairy cow. The Strategy was launched in August 2010 with the support of the whole dairy supply chain, all of whom have committed to collaborating to deliver on the self imposed targets which cover the range of management areas that impact on the welfare of the dairy cow, be it breeding, feeding or other factors. Much of the sectors work through the past year has concentrated on educational aspects for those managing the cows on a daily basis and their advisors, ensuring that we have a consistent and practical approach based on the latest science.

The Cattle Health and Welfare Group (CHAWG) has four key work priorities and one of these is this Dairy Cow Welfare Strategy. Through the industry forum, the sector can responsibly align messages and ensure that where weaknesses are identified, strategies and actions can be developed and delivered through the most appropriate industry organisations in a coordinated manner.

One of the potentially frustrating aspects of delivering a report like this is the demonstration and quantification of progress. Operating within biological systems such as dairy farms, it needs to be recognised that improvements take time. Although targets are being acted upon, the outcomes of these actions (especially in the genetics arena) will not become evident for several years (this is clearly demonstrated in relation to the fertility index information within the document). It is anticipated that in future annual reviews, it will be easier to clearly demonstrate the impact that this Strategy is having. This is just as important for the industry itself as well as interested external parties.

We as CHAWG are pleased with the progress the industry has made to date. By undertaking this review, areas have been identified that will require increased efforts in the coming years to ensure targets are met. What this report does demonstrate is the sheer quantity of activity which the industry is undertaking in order to continually improve the welfare of the dairy cow.



# Reporting Against Targets

## Priority 1 - Better on-farm recording and use of aggregate data

### Targets

- All dairy farmers recording the incidence of mastitis, lameness and the reasons for culling as a minimum and aggregate data shared with industry
- Data set analysed in 2011

A national system to collate data on dairy cow production, health and welfare trends and measures is in the development phase.

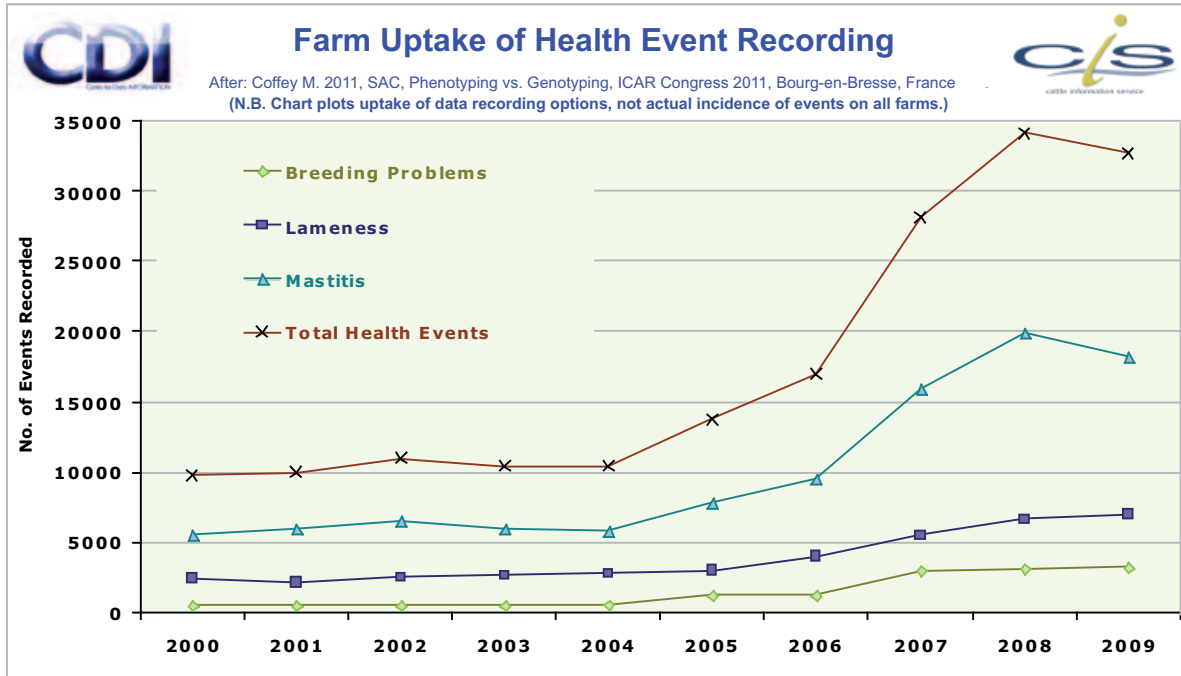
The milk recording organisations participating in national genetic evaluations (The Cattle Information Service, National Milk Records and Ulster Dairy Farmers) have given permission for interrogation of their combined data.

A database has been procured and a restricted website established which can already be interrogated for fertility, calving ease and some mastitis data.

Once the data are aggregated and current trend data are available, it will also be possible to interrogate the database by year, by breed and by the cow lactation number. This development will be a great asset to future reporting against targets.

In addition, to establish an individual baseline for identifying priorities and monitoring progress with farm-specific health planning, from April 2010, the Red Tractor Assurance Dairy scheme (RTA Dairy) has required the recording and collation of these criteria by all assured dairy farms, which account for around 95% of the total in GB.

The recording and reviewing of health and welfare incidence on dairy farms is an increasingly important part of any dairy managers role as indicated by the below chart.



Data from CIS recorded herds reflects the increased enthusiasm among farmers for the recording of key health events.

## Priority 2 - Mastitis: Improvement in recognition, treatment, prevention and control

Target

- 750 farm plans by 2012

Data provided by DairyCo for their Mastitis Control Plan to the end of June 2011 indicates that 224 delegates (predominantly vets) have attended the dedicated training course, with a total of 756 farms registering to participate in the scheme. Of these, 180 have so far submitted data twelve months following registration on the scheme. This number will continue to grow, (as it is dependent on the farms' month of registration) as more farms complete 12 months on the Plan.

There have been varying levels of compliance with regard to the recommendations and this will undoubtedly have some impact on the results achieved. Irrespective of this, however, the range of data will provide valuable details for consideration when planning the future evolution of the scheme.

Encouragingly, the incidence rate of cows affected by clinical mastitis (expressed as the proportion of cows affected) reduced by 7.8% over the 12 months to June 2011 –This is a significant drop.



### Priority 3 - Lameness Improvement in recognition, treatment, prevention and control

#### Targets

- 2011 launch
- 200 foot trimmers on NACFT website

DairyCo has undertaken to progress the valuable work initially completed by Bristol University Veterinary Faculty and funded by the Tubney Charitable Trust on dairy cow mobility. This addressed mobility and its impact on both physical and financial aspects of farming systems.

DairyCo also developed the **DairyCo mobility score** with the industry and the scoring scheme of 0-3 is now viewed as the industry standard. Importantly, the milk recording organisations now have tools embedded in their recording packages which use this system of scoring, allowing producers to input and monitor data at both herd and individual cow level.

Under the title of the **DairyCo Healthy Feet Programme** a number of support resources have been developed with the aim of 'encouraging farmers, vets and advisors to work together to help reduce lameness in dairy cattle on GB farms'.

Free resources such as visual lesion recognition cards, field guides on foot care and foot bathing guides have been produced for farmers and their advisors.

To help improve understanding of the issue, the DairyCo field-based extension team is involved in running meetings on the topics of mobility, lameness and the associated contributing factors.

A mentor programme involving vets and category 1 members of the National Association of Cattle Foot Trimmers (NACFT) is also helping to spread best practice.

Mentoring includes independent mobility scoring at least twice a year for herds, a skills assessment of the farm staff involved in foot care, and an assessment of the risk factors on the farm to identify the major causes/reasons behind lameness incidence. The results of this assessment are then compiled into a report. This helps the mentor and farm personnel together to produce a 'mobility contract', which details actions and timescales to reduce the identified risks.

The mentor programme was piloted in late 2010 with a group of vets and foot trimmers to evaluate the proposed delivery model, and in June 2011 the first workshop to train mentors took place. The national 'launch' of the mentor programme took place at the 2011 Dairy Event and Livestock Show.

To ensure that dairy farmers are kept up to date with the latest scientific advances, DairyCo has launched a five-year research partnership with a number of leading research establishments.

One of these includes a work programme on lameness in the dairy cow that will cover:

- Evidence based protocols for the treatment of lameness
- Treatment of individual cows
- Farm level interventions
- Impact of lameness on performance
- Associations between nutrition, body condition score change and lameness

Future annual reports will provide reviews of progress made in this area.

Currently the NACFT has six categories of foot trimmers. The number after each of the following categories indicates the number of trimmers registered in each section. Currently there are 79 foot trimmers registered, out of the target of 200. Further information is available at [www.nacft.com](http://www.nacft.com)

### Foot Trimmer categories explained:

**Category 1:** Dutch course trained, passed diploma examination or National Proficiency Tests Council (NPTC) equivalent and attended biennial continuing assessment **(23)**

**Category 2:** As Category 1 but not attending biennial assessment within last two years, or newly qualified trimmer (NQ) **(7)**

**Category 3:** Attended a four day course in foot trimming by a qualified instructor of any nationality, holds written Certificate of Attendance in a form acceptable to the Association **(42)**

**Category 4:** Self-taught foot trimmer **(7)**

*5 and 6 below are not actual professionally trimming but are still able to register.*

**Category 5:** Persons interested or involved in the promotion of cattle foot trimming (7)

**Category 6:** Honorary membership for exceptional service to the craft of cattle foot trimming (1)



## Priority 4 - Understanding infertility

Target

- Campaign / programme to be scoped and developed by 2012

Infertility in the dairy cow continues to be a challenge for many dairy farmers. The complex nature of the issue requires farmers and their managers to ensure they have the unique requirements of individual cows in the correct balance to achieve maximum conception rates.

Many fertility-related initiatives appear under the headings of other key welfare areas such as genetics, where the selection index is seeking improved fitness traits and cow nutrition with related body condition scoring programmes. Such programmes, be they from commercial organisations or through DairyCo, are all striving to achieve the common goal of increasing the efficiency of the dairy herd, which has fertility at its heart.

Though a national co-ordinated campaign on fertility is not currently being scoped or planned, there is considerable activity being undertaken at a more local level through a range of organisations that support the dairy farm – and the process of milk recording now being undertaken by many farmers will provide valuable production data that allows for better informed management decisions. Fertility management can only benefit from this.

The British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA) is engaged with the issue of fertility. New, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for vets in practice has been commissioned and delivered in south west and north west England in 2010. A new modular programme of CPD for recent graduates is also being delivered, which includes a day dedicated to dairy fertility management.

The DairyCo *pd+* (fertility management) manual for dairy farmers is regularly updated to ensure the latest science is accessible to the dairy farmer. In addition, DairyCo has committed to review existing knowledge and identify where any future initiative would best sit, without duplicating other areas of its knowledge transfer programme. The complex nature of the issue makes the development of any national initiative for infertility extremely challenging, but the appraisal by DairyCo should identify gaps where any further co-ordinated approaches may be beneficial in increasing fertility.



## Priority 5 - Cow nutrition

### Targets

- 10% of British dairy farmers regularly body condition scoring their herds
- 10% of dairy farmers attending DairyCo *feeding+* events by 2012 (or similar)

Three thousand copies of the DairyCo *feeding+* manual have been distributed to the dairy sector to date. This includes not only dairy farmers but their advisors and the wider industry. Importantly, the *feeding+* manual is a dynamic document and provides farmers with not just the latest scientific knowledge about nutrition, but also clear guidance on how to best apply this science.

The DairyCo extension team works alongside industry specialists in supporting implementation of theory into practical uptake on-farm. In the last year a number of discussion groups have covered topics relating to nutrition on farm, including grazing and dry cow management through to practical aspects of clamp management and feed budgeting, all of which aid the understanding of feeding regimes on farm. This is in addition to those events conducted by commercial businesses, many of which are incorporating information from the *feeding+* manual in presentations and advice packages.

The nutrition of the dairy cow is an important assessment area of the Red Tractor Assurance Dairy Scheme (RTA Dairy). The presence of dedicated ration plans and their effectiveness in maintaining cows in an a body condition appropriate to their production status is carefully assessed within the standards of the scheme.

DairyCo continues to allocate dairy farmers' levy funds in seeking improved feeding efficiency, in line with the nutritional requirements of the modern dairy cow.

DairyCo has produced factsheets to aid with the understanding of the importance and impact of changes in dairy cow body condition score during lactation. These factsheets are soon to be complemented by data capture forms which will allow producers to monitor both individual cows and groups through the lactation to identify if changes in management and/or feeding regime would benefit the system. These sit alongside the online information and fertility resource *pd+* which will be available (in a rebranded format) from late 2011. They may also be used within group meetings where practical sessions on body condition score are held.

In addition, a number of retailers/milk purchasers have incorporated a body condition score component into their supply agreements with producers which will aid the implementation of this management technique.

## Priority 6 - Addressing welfare through Farm Assurance

### Targets

- Reduction in number of farmers classified as 'high risk' by RTA Dairy Scheme
- Incorporation of welfare outcomes measures in future review

The latest version of the dairy farm assurance standards was introduced in April 2010. This incorporated a substantive change in layout as part of a harmonisation project for the Red Tractor schemes across all sectors. In dairy health and welfare, the key addition was a requirement to collate and review health records and then to use them to assist with the review of the health plan. Targets are to improve the general level of conformance overall, and in particular to reduce the number of farmers regarded as 'high risk', i.e. those that have a larger number of non-conformances at their routine assessments.

The restructuring of the standards has restricted the longer term monitoring of trends with individual standards, however overall the assessment pass rate with no non-conformances at routine inspections has improved slightly (N.B. Where non-conformances are identified, they must generally be rectified within 28 days of the assessment.) From October 2011, data will be available for a full 18 month audit cycle from over 11,000 farms assessed since the April 2010 standards revision, which will re-establish a baseline to allow more meaningful monitoring and analysis of rolling trends to report in future.

Also, as second round assessments to this version of the standards begin, repeat non-conformance will be more readily identifiable. This, together with the number of non-conformances, will be valuable in helping to identify the higher risk farms that struggle to maintain conformance with the standards between assessments. Additional measures for these higher risk farms can include more frequent routine visits, revisits to check rectification and increased likelihood of a spot check. Ultimately, with more focus on higher risk farms, the ambition is to ensure that their conformance in all areas including health and welfare improves and continues that trend.

The inclusion of objective welfare outcome measures has been a desire of the scheme for several years. Progress was limited however, although there have been increasing amounts of information about outcomes from research such as the EU Welfare Quality project, the most appropriate measures that could be practically incorporated into routine assurance assessments were not adequately defined. The Tubney Funded 'AssureWel' project being conducted by Bristol University Veterinary Faculty, the RSPCA and the Soil Association is trying to address this very point and the Red Tractor assurance scheme is actively participating in the dairy aspects of the project with them. The scheme's Technical Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Bristol team in January 2011 and Red Tractor Assurance Dairy Scheme assured farms have been participating in pilot studies.

Through active engagement in this project, the scheme can ensure the measures that are evaluated and recommended are suitable for routine use, thereby potentially allowing them to be incorporated more quickly for general application in the future.

## Priority 7 - Improving welfare through breeding programmes

Target

- All farmers aware of *breeding+*

All major breeding companies support DairyCo's *breeding+* programme and use its results, as well as promoting the *breeding+* logo, in their bull catalogues. This data is estimated to be utilised by the vast majority of dairy farmers (>75%).

Knowledge transfer through farmer meetings, press articles and publications continues. In the last year over 13000 face to face meetings (both individual and group) have been held between DairyCo and dairy farmers on business improvement issues, of which the majority will have a welfare component. The DairyCo extension resource is a valuable implementation phase in the knowledge building process for farmers.

The genetic quality of AI dairy sires used on milk recorded herds is being monitored and continues to improve, while all fitness traits incorporated in the Profitable Lifetime Index (PLI) continue to show an improving trend (Lifespan, Fertility Index, Somatic Cell Count, Mammary and Feet & Legs).

Over the past 10 years the UK has made enormous strides with breeding for health, welfare and longevity traits. This has put the UK at the forefront of world development of new breeding traits such as locomotion and condition score, both of which are known to have high genetic associations with the reduction of lameness and improved fertility.

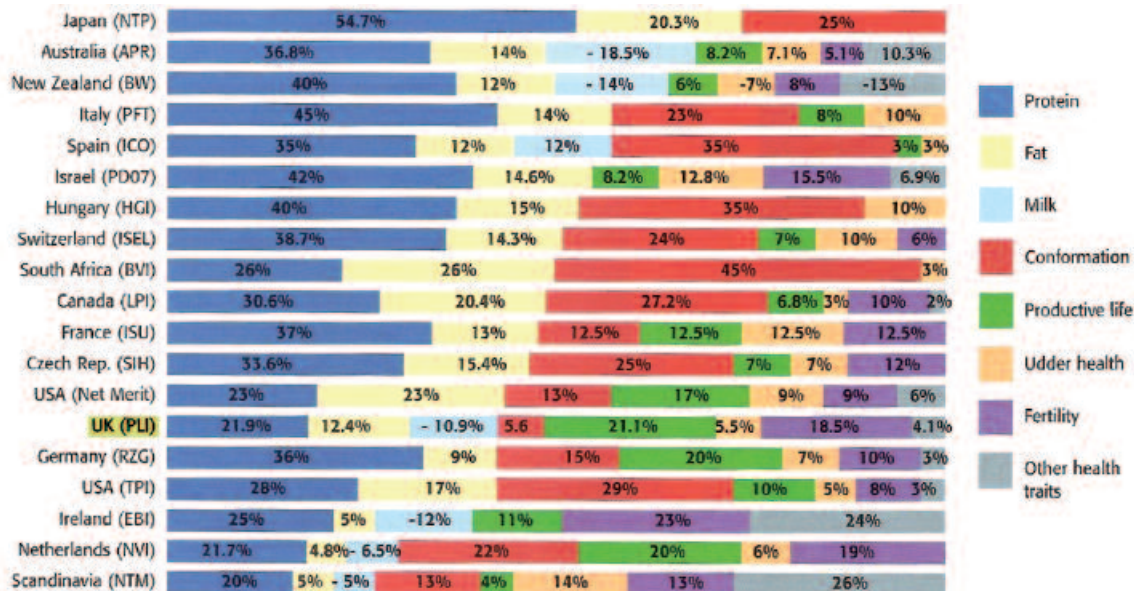
It has long been recognised that in order for dairy farmers to continue to invest and improve both the environment and genetics of their cows, they must make a profit. With this in mind, the national breeding indices have been scientifically developed to place the maximum amount of selection pressure on health, welfare and longevity traits whilst not compromising the production efficiency of the cow to the detriment of farmer income.



Since 2000, national breeding indices have been heavily focused on traits which affect the management of fertility, lameness and mastitis, whilst still recognising the importance of milk yield.

Today, the national Profitable Lifetime Index (PLI) gives priority to fitness traits over production in the ratio 55:45. DairyCo-commissioned research, undertaken by Promar International, clearly demonstrates that in addition to the obvious welfare benefits to the dairy cow, there is also a financial value to the farmer of implementing the PLI approach.

Worldwide selection indexes with the respective ratio of protein, fat, milk, conformation, productive life, udder health, fertility, and other health and management traits in %



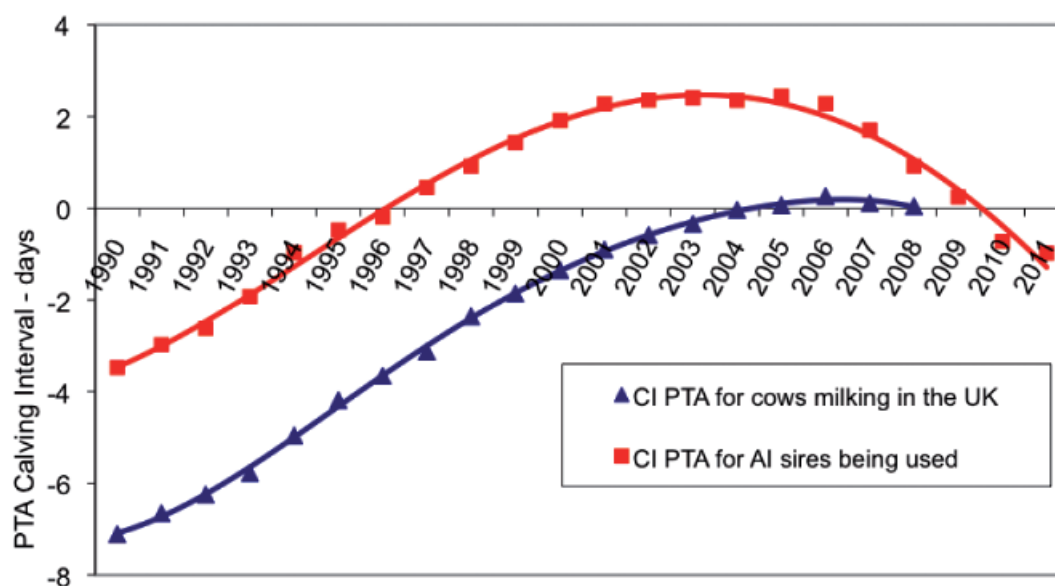
The chart above (source; Holstein International June 2009) demonstrates how the UK's national ranking index currently in use (Profitable Lifetime Index; PLI) ranks among the leading nations for emphasis on traits other than production. Note in particular the UK's number one position for emphasis on cow longevity (productive life) (21.1%)

Over the past decade, we have seen the development of 'sub-composites' within the national indices which specifically tackle areas of ongoing concern, such as fertility; calving ease; lameness predictions through locomotion, feet and leg scores; and somatic cell count scores and Type Linears (Individual conformation traits; scored on a linear scale of biological extremes) converging with actual mastitis records to produce a future Udder Health Index.

The improvement of the predictions and evaluations for longevity are currently being enhanced to include British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) records and improved extended Type Traits (Descriptive traits for cow conformation; scored on desirability).

All of this work, together with the implementation of new technology for better bull selection and breeding on farm, has resulted in both continued improvement in cow longevity, reductions in national somatic cell count rates and, importantly, a halt in the decline of female fertility. Indeed, the trend for fertility is now starting to increase, thanks to the implementation and use of the National Fertility Index.





The above chart shows that the genetics of the Holstein bulls being used on British dairy farms saw a gradual deterioration of fertility, as measured by calving interval, up until 2005 (red line), at which point a national genetic assessment for fertility was introduced by DairyCo. Since then farmers have had the ability to select for better fertility and as a consequence their genetic quality improved (ie. came down). The subsequent impact on the cow population can be seen in the blue line, which gives the average genetic quality of cows by their year of birth. As we only measure fertility in the mature milking cow, figures beyond 2008 are not yet available, but we can predict a further improvement which will follow the bull trend.

Genetic measures of the national herd play an important part in establishing the current state and future goal for the industry in terms of health, welfare and longevity. Genetic development will continue to be focused on the development of new traits, more accurate predictions and more information about bulls, as more useful and better standards of on-farm recording are developed.

Knowledge transfer with regard to breeding policy has been the focus for a number of 'impact groups' - short term working groups of farmers who come together to solve a particular problem and then disband once a solution is found, unless they identify another issue, run by the DairyCo extension team. These groups have been spread throughout Britain and the initial focus was on breeding choices for those who were looking to cross breed. The key messages about the importance of having a planned approach, using genetic data for the breed of choice and matching breeding aims with actual animals were the areas addressed.

In addition several farmer meetings were held across the country on dairy cattle breeding. To aid with these, the information from within the existing DairyCo *breeding+* programme was distilled down into a 24 page booklet titled 'Breeding briefs' which is available as a free download from the DairyCo website and has been handed out at conferences and meetings since January 2011. The value of this document in educating the 'next generation' on breeding information has seen its distribution at the Holstein Young Breeders weekend and use in agricultural colleges. To date, more than 1200 copies have been distributed and an additional 650 downloaded.



## Priority 8 - Informing and educating the consumer

### Targets

- **Website promoted by all stakeholders**
- **Improvement in consumer knowledge of dairy farming**

DairyCo launched the website, [www.thisisdairyfarming.com](http://www.thisisdairyfarming.com). This is the main route for providing information to the public about British dairy farming methods and the welfare standards achieved by British dairy farmers. DairyCo is working to increase the profile of the website through search engine optimisation and by establishing links to and from other relevant websites such as those of milk buyers, farmers unions, retailers and welfare organisations. A central element is the “Moovies” section, which has a series of short videos on different aspects of dairy farming, presented by farmers and experts.

This website has been promoted by and linked with all the main industry trade associations and has been recognised by senior policy makers. DairyCo also works extremely hard with the content of the site to ensure that it achieves a 1st page Google ranking on key dairy farming issues, including welfare.

DairyCo has also launched a new dairy farming module on [www.foodafactoflife.org](http://www.foodafactoflife.org), a joint initiative between DairyCo, the British Nutrition Foundation and other sectors of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB). ‘Food - a fact of life’ provides a progressive approach to teaching about healthy eating, cooking, food and farming from 3 to 16 years. It provides a wealth of free resources to stimulate learning, ensuring that consistent and up-to-date messages are delivered. This site, in the year leading up to 31 March 2011, achieved a 31% increase in usage (visits, page views and downloads).

Consumer awareness of the Red Tractor logo on assured food products continues to grow, particularly in the younger 18-24 age group. Awareness among this demographic is 62% compared with the national average of 52%. The Red Tractor website ([www.redtractor.org.uk](http://www.redtractor.org.uk)) provides supporting information to consumers on what assurance actually means with regard to animal welfare, food hygiene and safety, traceability and environmental protection. Specifically regarding dairy, there are summary details and links to the full standards that producers meet, allowing the welfare credentials of assured British dairy farmers to be positively promoted.

In relation to consumer-facing dairy welfare literature and point of sale information, all retailers are promoting the way they are helping their milk suppliers improve welfare through on-pack labelling, in-store promotions and retailer magazines.

An EU-funded organic campaign to promote welfare increased the profile of milk and dairy products in the media following advertisements by Dairy Crest, Yeo Valley, Müller, Arla Foods and others.

The National Farmers Union (NFU) has developed a consumer friendly dairy welfare leaflet to be used by producers during farm open days, school visits, in farm shops, at farmers markets and at agricultural shows. The NFU has produced 10,000 copies of the 'British Dairy Farming & Cow Welfare' leaflet in 2010 and over 1,500 were circulated to participating dairy farms for the LEAF Open Farm Sunday Event. Open Farm Sunday is now in its sixth year and annually sees over 400 farms open their gates to over 150,000 members of the public.

The remaining 8,500 leaflets have been used to promote dairy farming and cow welfare through the NFU 'Let's Talk Farming Road show'. The NFU Road show annually attends between 80 – 100 events including school visits, farm open days and for 2011 around 50 agricultural shows. The aim of the road show is to educate and inform the consumer of tomorrow about farming and food production.

DairyCo research indicates that 62% of consumers agree that British dairy farmers are doing a good job caring for their animals.

Dairy farmers, through DairyCo, have funded a range of resources for use at farm visits and consumer shows including flyers, stickers, farm banners and a DVD show reel. Investment in promoting the image of dairy farming in the media has resulted in an 8:1 return on investment when compared with equivalent advertising spend.

The inclusion or reference to Red Tractor and farm assurance within many of these materials, reinforcing that all farms have been independently assessed to a robust set of standards, provides added credibility to substantiate the messages being conveyed on welfare and other aspects of milk production.



## Priority 9 - Preparing for the future

### Targets

- **Clear protocol in place for farmers and industry on dealing with welfare and other sector issues**
- **Two briefing days annually in addition to current industry events**

The Cattle Health and Welfare Group will publish an annual report against the ten recommendations recognised in the Dairy Cow Welfare Strategy. In future these recommendations will be reviewed and changed as necessary.

This report is delivering on this objective and will set the basis against which future reports will be structured. The industry continues to take the welfare of the dairy cow seriously and will continue to review the priorities to ensure they remain focused and applicable to dairy cows' needs.

Traditionally the industry has had a disparate approach to health and welfare activities. The role of CHAWG is to bring these activities under one umbrella and enable a more focused and co-ordinated approach, reducing the risk of duplication of effort and capitalising on resource efficiency by the sector. Through this report and other activities, CHAWG asks the industry to keep it informed of dairy cow welfare activities so that the knowledge base can continue to be grown and shared with colleagues, with the aim of continued, focused and measurable improvement.

The Cattle Health and Welfare Group (CHAWG) has an agreement with the Animal Health Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) on new and emerging health and welfare issues. Before any public announcement, the AHVLA will first consult with CHAWG to ensure that what is being proposed in terms of communications and on-farm actions is discussed and agreed with the group first. This ensures a consistent message and importantly a joined up approach from the sector in moving forward.

Over the past year, Retailers, Processors and the now disbanded Regional Development Agencies have organised and held numerous meetings focusing on cattle health & welfare issues. An example of the sort of work that is being undertaken is included below;

### Retailer – Morrisons:

Morrisons hold regular dairy producer group meetings working with all three of their key dairy processing companies – Arla, Dairy Crest and First Milk.

In the year 2010/11 Morrisons held eight producer group meetings. These were primarily focussed on working with the producer group to help identify areas for investment in applied research via the Morrisons Farming Programme to help build a more sustainable dairy industry.

Morrisons acknowledge that health and welfare is of paramount importance and that both can have a major impact on a farm's profitability. As a result the sharing of health and welfare knowledge / best practice is a key area of discussion at the producer meetings and Morrisons hope to commission a number of farmer led, health related, applied research projects soon.

### Processor – First Milk:

First Milk held 60 events in 2010/11 covering a wide range of topics, of these 43 focused on health and welfare related issues. Some of the topics covered by the First Milk Academy events are included in the table below;

First Milk Academy - Events 2010/11
Calf rearing
Heifer rearing
Housing design and ventilation
Improving herd fertility
Improving herd health
Johnes disease
Lameness & mobility scoring
Lameness prevention
Nutrition planning

The First Milk Academy holds two main types of event a.) one day seminars, and b.) four day workshops. The in depth workshops are accredited by the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester and delivered by Kingshay Farming Trust or the Scottish Agricultural College. There are 6 modules in this suite of courses and completion of all 6 leads to a Higher Education Certificate in Dairy Herd management.

This October the First Milk Academy will be running a national programme on Improving Herd Health which will see 7 workshops held.

### Regional Development Agency – North West (NWDA):

The North West Development Agency established the North West Livestock Programme several years ago. Part of the RDPE Livestock Programme funds the uptake and implementation of Animal Health and Welfare Plans, which are carried out by the farmer, the farm vet and an adviser. The planning looks at specific health and welfare issues and aims to improve profitability and product quality.

Over the last year the North West Livestock Programme has held over 20 cattle related health and welfare meetings. The topics covered include;

North West Livestock Programme – Cattle Health and Welfare Events – 2010/11
Dairy fertility improvements
Bovine Viral Diarrhoea control
Controlling lameness – cow tracks
Cattle handling systems
Benchmarking and cow signals
Cattle lameness and foot trimming
Calf pneumonia
Breeding and genetics
Husbandry, management & health

In addition to the above meetings over 15 farm case study meetings have been held on the 6 North West monitor farms. All events and meetings are deemed just one part of the knowledge transfer element which includes the website: <http://livestocknw.co.uk/>, fact sheets, reports and videos.

Furthermore, DairyCo provides a number of opportunities through which farmers can learn more about welfare, including workshops, farm walks, and 'impact groups'. The British Mastitis Conference 2010 was attended by more than 100 delegates. These were a mix of vets and advisors (80%) and farmers (20%).

The Cattle Lameness Conference, was also extremely well attended with over 150 delegates including vets, consultants, researchers and representatives from allied industries. In addition, in April 2011, the fourth annual National Cattle Mobility Event took place at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester. The aims of this initiative are to advance the education and training of farmers and allied professions in the subject of cattle mobility.

The industry also has access to several key independent 'specialists' who are used in an advisory capacity as well as spokespeople, who are able to respond to any issues on the dairy cow raised from both within and outwith the sector.

Dairy farmers, through DairyCo, have also funded their own public relations resources to help promote to the general public the good work done in caring for cows and the countryside. This includes:

- 'Making the most of the media' – a guide to help farmers take up opportunities to deliver positive messages about dairy farming
- A wallet size card with '5 things everyone should know about dairy farming in Britain'
- A pack for farmers with resources and signposting information



## Priority 10 - Industry co-ordination

### Targets

- **Annual report published**

(Refer to Priority 9 for details related to this outcome)

- **Issue statements to be reviewed regularly and new issues identified**

Dairy cow welfare is one of the areas covered by the industry Dairy Communications Group, the aim of which is to have industry agreed statements based on scientific evidence and industry practices for use when communicating on issues that may be of interest to the general public. These statements have been agreed between DairyCo, Dairy UK, the NFU and other industry colleagues such as the Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers (RABDF).

Currently there are 26 approved issue / media statements covering topics such as; mastitis, lameness, & large scale dairy farming and a further 12 are work in progress.

CHAWG also liaises closely with the Chief Veterinary Officers (CVO's) of Scotland and Wales, as well as the UK, in the identification and addressing of dairy cow welfare issues. CHAWG provides the CVO's with a 'one stop shop' for the discussion of key and at times sensitive issues related to dairy cow welfare. CHAWG is able to provide this because of the wide range of organisations represented at the table results in a genuine 'industry' viewpoint and an all-encompassing collaborative approach to solving identified issues.






## Conclusion

This report clearly demonstrates the positive progress made by the industry towards the agreed targets. Having said that, the Cattle Health and Welfare Group recognise that there is still a long way to go. The CHAWG will maintain this Strategy as one of its key work items and will continue to challenge the industry on its delivery.

Importantly the CHAWG will continually review the targets in relation to appropriateness, indicator measures and scientific advancement to ensure continued, relevant momentum against the stated timescales.

The CHAWG would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have provided input to this review and encourage those that feel they could contribute to our efforts to make contact with the CHAWG secretariat to discuss how this can be done.



If you have any questions or comments,  
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