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The European Agricultural
Fund for Rural Development
Europe investing in rural areas



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Editorial

What market segment are you in?

The editorial in the last RADA News focused on what farming is for. Having conjectured that the road to profitability and sustainability is by treating farming as a business, some clearer explanation is required. It might be surprising that this takes us into the murky realms of marketing, but who you are governs what you do which is true in any walk of life. And what you do, besides being of interest to the marketers, also governs business success.

All companies, and these days almost all organisations, need to consider the segments their 'customers' are in. They do this so that they can target communications, products and services. It's the basic stuff of marketing – what is your age and income, what car do you drive, where do you take your holidays, what children and pets do you have, what size is your house?

This relates to farming as well and it has been interesting to see some recent segmentation of farmers that relates to how they run their business. It seems that farmers fall into three basic segments:

■ *The Practical Farmer*

If you spend all your time on the practical job of farming and have no time to attend meetings or get training, and barely have time to see the accountant,

let alone address the issues of Cross Compliance and other regulations, then you probably fit into this segment. Apparently about 20% of farmers do; they also tend to be the ones who are least profitable. This is because the Practical Farmer has no spare time to step back and take actions to improve the business. If you recognise yourself, read on.

■ *The Technical Farmer*

These farmers are the information munching monsters and they represent about 60% of the farming community. Profitability in this segment is variable, but the abiding characteristic is a drive to know and apply the latest technical information, with the approach that if knowledge and tools can be used to get fertility, animal health, crop growth and everything else right, then

the 'business end' will take care of itself. Sometimes this approach works, sometimes it doesn't; it depends on how the latest 'project' impacts on the business.

■ *The Business Farmer*

About 20% of farmers (apparently) spend time thinking about the farm and the life it brings them. They set targets for how much income they wish for and how they want to live their lives and they gear the farm business around these, so that the farming has an objective. Because they know what they want the business to do, they focus their efforts on these goals, focussing the technical detail time on the areas needed to gain success and managing the people in the business to contribute to the shared 'end game'. This segment tends to be the most profitable.

Now, this is no judgement call. It's not for anyone to point the finger at 'good' or 'bad', but we can all benefit from knowing 'who we are' and what that might mean to the bottom line. You can see how the understanding of these 'segments' helps companies and organisations address the 'needs' of the farming community.

But there is a simple and helpful truth here – if you want a business to be profitable, then you have to know what profit you are targeting and gear and structure the business to meet that goal. Interestingly, these three basic farmer segments cover all farm types: the size of farm, number of stock, owned, tenanted, staff employed – all have no bearing on what segment you are in.

Which brings us to the conclusion that business success depends on people; who they are and what they do. Take a look at the training available in this issue of RADA News particularly on staff management, leadership and communication, as well as all the technical topics and see if we can help you. ■



Annette McDonald, Head of Skills, Innovation and Enterprise Solutions, Reaseheath College.

Industry Comments and Letters to the Editor - An Invitation

Welcome to the sixth RADA News. The aim of the newsletter is to provide useful technical and market information and insight for the farmers and rural businesses of Cheshire and the North West on a bi-monthly basis. We will also be featuring different activities, demonstration events and skills training courses that are available and we hope that these will be of interest to all involved with farming and rural businesses in the region.

You can send us your comments and opinions on any issues and we will print some of these in future issues. Contact us at:

■ RADA, Enterprise Delivery Hub, Reaseheath College, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 6DF.

■ Tel: 01270 613 195

■ Email: hub@reaseheath.ac.uk

Too much RADA News?

If you receive duplicate copies of RADA News, please contact Emily Welch on 01270 616464 or email emilyw@reaseheath.ac.uk and we will make sure you only get what you need.

ABOUT RADA

Our aim at RADA is to improve the profitability and resource use efficiency of farms in North West England by delivering high quality knowledge transfer that is focussed on the needs of farmers.

The philosophy of RADA is to view 'sustainability' and 'profitability' as inextricably linked. Based at Reaseheath College, we use Government and European funding to provide training, advice and knowledge transfer which meets the needs of our region's farmers and their employees. We also inform the rural sector and those that develop policy for it.

The RADA team and partner organisations are professional, accessible, farmer focussed and flexible in their dedication to filling the skills and knowledge gaps that the farming community needs in order to be profitable and sustainable.

Our programmes are continually evolving and aim to provide skills and knowledge in all areas of managing businesses and people, technical farming issues and environmental matters.

The newsletter will keep you up to date with what is on offer.

If there is anything you need that is not in our training programmes, then please contact the team on 01270 613 195 or at hub@reaseheath.ac.uk and we will endeavour to help. ■

 **RADA**
GROWING YOUR FARMING BUSINESS

RADA News

Muck and Soil North West – helping get the basics right

This large event was held at Reaseheath College in March and provided lots of useful information, practical demonstrations and debate. George Fisher reports on a successful day.



Almost 700 farmers, students and industry people gathered for the Muck and Soil North West event – organised by Harvey Hughes in conjunction with Reaseheath College, supported by the Livestock North West Programme and sponsored by GrowHow UK Ltd.

Plenty to see

Machinery demonstrations were to the fore, with a wide range of solid manure spreaders, slurry injectors, dribble bar and trailing shoe applicators. There didn't seem to be any splash plate spreaders prominently on show – a sign of the times with this method of application losing favour on grounds of nitrogen loss from the technique.

One of the key features at this event is the discussion of the machinery and the efficient use of manures, facilitated by Howard Hughes. Howard stressed more than ever the need to get the most out of organic manures. "With fertiliser prices as they are and environmental concerns coming more in focus, we need to make sure that we are using the nitrogen in our slurries and manures as much as possible. So it is important to talk with visitors about the role each machine has in that equation," commented Howard.

Soil management as important as manure management

This year's event had 'soil' in the title for good reason. The nutrients in organic manures will



Above: Demonstrating spreading digestate from the Reaseheath AD Plant.

Below: One of the trailing shoe slurry applicators on display.



only be used efficiently if the soil is in good condition. That means good structure, with no compaction, a healthy population of worms and the right balance of air, moisture and soil particles.

To help visitors focus on the need to manage soils as the base of any grassland farming system, there were a range of aerators, sward lifters, slot seeders and harrows on display and demonstration.

The soil features proved very popular and were a welcome addition to the event. There will be a Cheshire Grassland Society demonstration day on these issues in October, so keep an eye on RADA News for more details.

Plea for future legislation to be sensible

Another welcome addition to the event was a lunchtime discussion in the main marquee. Congleton dairy farmer Stuart Yarwood opened the session by explaining how the NVZ regulations were really about best practice. "There's nothing to scare anybody in the NVZ regulations; it's all basically what we should be doing anyway to get the most out of our manure resource," he said, but added, "I do have a plea for the Environment Agency and the regulators though. Please, please don't make farming harder and more complicated with any new legislation from the Water Framework Directive. Farmers will work with you, as long as you don't work against us."



Above: Cheshire dairy farmer Stuart Yarwood.

Sam Grundy of RADA, and ex-College Farm Manager, echoed Stuart's points and added, "We have to realise that the environment is important to the future of farming and we must avoid damaging it, but we need food production and we need the policy people to work with us in drawing the balance.

"I've seen a lot of change in my time working on the College farm and change will continue. The



Above: Howard Hughes discussing soil management issues.

good thing is that making sure that nutrients from manures don't leak into the environment means that they are used to grow grass and crops, which is good for profits," Sam concluded.



Above: Sam Grundy of RADA.

Elaine Jewkes, Grassland Specialist with sponsor GrowHow UK Ltd, added some practical tips. "We need to get the basics of soil structure and health right first before we can successfully implement any

nutrient management plan. We've seen a lot of fantastic machinery being demonstrated today, but if you want to get the best return out of shiny kit, pick a spade and a soil sampler! These will pay handsomely in helping to get soil structure and nutrients right to make the most out of manures and reduce fertiliser bills. And that is true regardless of any legislation," she added.

Advice to hand

There was plenty of advice from the trade stands around the event and Harvey Hughes ran a series of one-to-one NVZ drop-in clinics during the day, which were part funded by the RDPE Skills Programme for Cheshire.

With tours around the Reaseheath demonstration AD Plant also proving very popular, this was a truly 'rounded' day, where visitors could explore all practical, technical and environmental aspects of soil and muck management. ■



Above: Elaine Jewkes, GrowHow UK Ltd.



Above: Demonstration of sward lifting.

Powys farmer among RABDF Dairy Crest Dairy Student of the Year finalists

Powys young farmer, William Astley, who is currently studying Agriculture with Dairy Farm Management at Reaseheath College was among four finalists for the RABDF Dairy Crest Dairy Student of the Year award 2012.

Will received a memento in London after making a formal presentation on dairy farming. Last month he was selected for the preliminary round of interviews at Reaseheath College of Agriculture, where a panel of judges questioned 14 short-listed entrants on the College's dairy enterprise and how it could improve its efficiency and service to the industry. Will was one of six semi-finalists selected to tour Dairy Crest's Severnside processing facility in Gloucestershire where they each gave a presentation on their vision of the dairy sector in 2022.

Will hails from Llansantffraid where his parents, Phil and Jane, farm a 100 cow Holstein herd. He is a member of Shropshire Young Holstein Breeders and is currently grading up the family herd to pedigree status with the Deytheur prefix. Will commented, "I'm thrilled to be among the finalists for this award after being really interested in farming, and in particular dairy genetics, since I was 10 years of age when my parents allowed me to select which bull to use and unknowingly I happened to choose the UK's top sire. That bit of luck has driven me to search out a career in genetics after graduating, before I eventually take over the family farm for which I have ambitions to become one of the leading herds in the country."

He added, "To the industry's future, I think dairying will be exciting in the long term, however in the short term I believe that UK farmers and processors will have to start gearing up for 2015 and the end of the EU quota regime. Other member states are planning serious expansion and in order to compete, UK producers will have to prepare



Above: William Astley (second from right) with RABDFs Nick Everington, Reaseheath College Course Manager Jane Richardson and Mike Sheldon from Dairy Crest.

by increasing herd size or average yield, while processors will have to invest to improve their efficiency and increase their added value range."

Dairy Crest's milk procurement director, Mike Sheldon said, "We are very pleased to support this award which demonstrates our commitment to supporting young people. The award plays an important part in raising the profile of dairy farming to the next generation, which is crucial to the long term future of our industry. In fact the number of colleges participating increased by 40% on the year. We were also delighted to welcome the students to our Severnside dairy which enabled them to get an insight into dairy processing and also the importance of efficiency and innovation throughout the supply chain."

RABDF's chief executive, Nick Everington commented, "Rewarding success and achievement and promoting career opportunities in the dairy sector are key activities for our association. We need more of these intelligent and highly motivated young farmers to drive our industry forward to enable it to compete in world markets and secure the future for British dairy farming." ■



Langford Farm's Open Day

Langford Farm's Open Day in February concentrated on the beef enterprise at the Livestock North West Cheshire Beef and Sheep Monitor Farm. The day started with a talk given by Northumberland farmers and brothers, Angus and Duncan Nelles.

Make changes to make a profit

Making a profit and performance recording was the focus of Angus and Duncan's talk in the morning. The Northumberland beef and sheep farmers from Thistlehaugh Farm, Longhorsley, Morpeth explained the changes they'd made to their business, the things that have worked, not worked and the chances they have taken to try and improve profit on their farm – including outdoor pigs and a mixed result with free-range poultry.

The brothers gave an intriguing talk on their experience of being part of a monitor farm group in Northumberland, as well as their own performance recording and no nonsense approach to making a profit.

"High beef prices weren't meaning high profit", said Angus. "10 to 15 years ago we sat down and looked at what we were doing, writing a list of the things we liked to do and what we didn't like to do. My brother doesn't like driving tractors so we tried to eliminate machinery.

"We also decided we wanted to make money and didn't want to be poor. Losing calves and lambs wasn't great so we decided to streamline".

The pair decided to go down a simple, easy care route with their sheep and moved from Limousin type cattle to more grassland suited Aberdeen Angus breeds. A mixture of Lley and Charollais rams are used on pure Lley ewes.

"We had to have cattle that performed on grass. We were looking to improve efficiency and working with a large cow that



Above: Visitors at the Langford Farm Open Day.

without concentrates may lose bodyweight, wasn't the way forward.

Striving to improve efficiency

"Cattle are also far less efficient at converting forage to bodyweight compared to sheep so we looked into adjusting numbers, reducing cattle and increasing sheep to 1,700 head.

"When single farm payment came in we thought we had 10 years to sort the job out to make money without the single farm payment. Four years ago we realised we weren't going to be able to do it.

"That's when the poultry enterprise came in. We were told there was going to be a demand for poultry, but what we weren't told is that they would want it for nought and we quickly realised it wouldn't work on a small scale so we've scaled it back."

Duncan added, "If anything it's made us appreciate the procurement industry of beef and sheep more as trying to sell out of spec chicken is very difficult. A lot of work goes in and it's a great product, but it's a challenge 52 weeks of the year.

Pigs though have provided a good source of fertiliser for their land which has improved their input costs - inputs being their biggest challenge.

"We realised if inputs were out of our control then we were limited at the end of the day. So we tried to eliminate them the best we could by looking at genetics."

They also introduced red and white clover to their leys and

converted to organic – not in a bid to save the world, but because it suited their system. It also made them learn more about grassland quality and management which proved the key to their production process.

Balancing beef and sheep numbers

Duncan explained, "We looked at the optimum number of sheep to cows and what we needed to make the most of our grassland, as land is the most expensive thing we have. We realised high numbers of cows were detrimental to our sheep but that we needed the sucklers to maintain grass management and grass quality and that we perhaps have 75% sheep / 25% cattle instead of 60%/40%.

Everything on the farm is EID tagged too as Duncan quickly valued the ability of being able to performance record his sheep and as a result make key decisions.

He said, "We found that one tup was being used on 70% of the ewes that we had to assist at lambing and if its daughters were coming into the flock that would soon become a problem. Being able to trace back which sheep came from which tup allowed us to kill that family and its problems, out of the flock.

Further info on the Nelligs' flock can be read at www.lleysheep.com/nellis.htm ■



RADA Events & Support

National Forage Conference

Wednesday 27th June – Reaseheath College



- **Concerned at declining production from forage?**
- **Worried about the effect of volatile feed prices on your margins?**
- **Want to increase forage utilisation on your farm?**

The conference draws together leading speakers from the UK and the US to give the latest thinking on maximising performance from forage. It includes a College farm tour and briefings.

Programme

- **09.30 Registration and tea/coffee**
- **10.00 Conference Introduction**
David Homer
- **How the length of ensiling affects the fermentation and nutritive value of silages**

Professor Limin Kung will explain the changes that occur during

ensiling and how these processes continue during storage and affect the nutritive value of the feed.

- **Keeping diets in balance: The special role of forages**

Dr Mary Beth Hall Forages have unique feed characteristics that set them apart from most concentrate and by-product feeds. Dr. Hall will explain how we can exploit the carbohydrates and physical form that forages bring to diets to support the productivity and well-being of ruminants.

- **The financial benefits of increasing forage use in all UK dairy farming systems**

Andy Thompson will use Promar FBA data to demonstrate the relationship between yield from forage and profit on high performing dairy farms and highlight the factors that drive better performance.

- **The Reaseheath model for increasing forage utilisation and the benefits it yields**

Mark Yearsley will outline the ways in which forage is managed at the Reaseheath unit to deliver high performance levels from the College herd.

- **Questions and panel discussion**
- **13.30 Lunch**
- **Afternoon**

Visit to the Reaseheath dairy, forage demonstrations and anaerobic digester unit.

- **Conference fee: Farmers £30 (incl VAT), all other attendees £90 (incl VAT).**

To register call 029 2047 5570, or visit www.biototal.co.uk

Prepaid attendance only, so book your place NOW as there are limited places available.

Opportunities from the RDPE Skills Programme.

In most cases 70% of the cost of training is provided by the RDPE Skills Programme, with only a 30% contribution from the farm business.

Rough Terrain Telescopic Handler and Cherry Picker Training

Take advantage of a 70% contribution through the RDPE Skills Programme and pay only 30% of the charges on these courses!

Ensure your employees are competently trained – saving you money with improved efficiency and reduced accidents.

- **Start Date: Availability from August 2012. Please book ASAP for training beyond August.**
- **Time: Flexible to meet your requirements**
- **Venue: Reaseheath College or your own premises**
- **Full cost would be £350. The cost to you with RDPE funded contribution is £108 for up to 3 employees on farm, or £33 per person at Reaseheath College.**

For example, a 1 day refresher - if you have 3 employees and can accommodate us on your premises - with a suitable machine meeting our health and safety requirements.

To book places on the course, please contact **Emily Welch** on 01270 616464 or emilyw@reaseheath.ac.uk

Lameness Control Programmes

Two lameness control programmes are available to farmers throughout Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside with support through the RDPE Skills Programme:

■ The DairyCo Healthy Feet

Programme was launched at the Dairy Event in September 2011. The Programme is a step-wise approach which will train and help dairy farmers make important progress towards diagnosing the problems, devising an action plan and developing the skills necessary for long-term lameness control. Trained providers (vets or foot trimmers who have attended a specialist course) facilitate the whole process and act as one-to-one advisers or 'mobility mentors'.

■ **FirstStep®** provides a comprehensive assessment of overall lameness risk factors on a dairy farm. Using data gathered from up to 20 different models, the programme helps identify factors that increase the risk of cows becoming lame. The system provides a comprehensive resource to help the training and mentoring process including visual tools and assessment videos of problem areas at farm level, designed to educate dairy personnel about lameness, its causes and effects, and treatment options.

For further details of how to get a lameness control plan on your farm with the support of the RDPE Skills Programme, contact Lisa Forbes on 01270 613195 or email lisaforbes@reaseheath.ac.uk

In partnership with:



Mastitis Control Programme

The DairyCo Mastitis Control Plan is a really effective, holistic new approach to mastitis control in the UK dairy herd. It's a complete farm approach to the problem. It is implemented by a vet or advisor, working with you to provide training, collect herd data and answer a detailed questionnaire. The results are fed into the system which then provides a bespoke, prioritised plan of action for your farm which will, if followed, lead to a substantial reduction in mastitis.

For further details of how to get the Mastitis Control Plan on your farm with the support of the RDPE Skills Programme, contact Lisa Forbes on 01270 613195 or email lisaforbes@reaseheath.ac.uk. This is available in Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside.

In partnership with:



Dairy Animal Health and Welfare – training for skills to improve performance

Profitable milk production means implementing high standards of animal health and welfare. The RDPE Skills Programme has arranged for a comprehensive series of training workshops for farmers and farm staff to support them in developing knowledge and skills to make improvements to their business. Workshops arranged in June and July include:

■ **Foot trimming** – bespoke training for your specific needs from routine trimming to trimming lame cows

- **The young calf** – from birth to weaning
- **Heat Detection & Fertility Management** – why don't my cows get in calf?
- **DIY AI** – bespoke training for your specific needs
- **Bull Fertility Testing**
- **Discussion group support** – groups of farmers (up to 10) can come together to receive training on any topic area as a closed meeting workshop

Both practical on-farm and indoor workshops are available for most topic areas, delivered by trained vet and consultant facilitators.

Training will be arranged according to demand. To register and receive support contact Lisa Forbes on 01270 613195 or email lisaforbes@reaseheath.ac.uk

In partnership with:



NVZ Awareness and Compliance

The new NVZ regulations came into effect on 1 January 2012 and farmers can get training and help to draw up the farm nutrient management plan and records that are part of compliance. This resource is available to individual farm businesses in the North West.

To find out more contact Lisa Forbes on 01270 613195 or email lisaforbes@reaseheath.ac.uk

In partnership with:



Developing Management Skills Programme

A 4 day course designed to develop the key skills to lead and manage people to achieve results in a farming business context:

- Communicating Effectively
- Managing Time & Influencing Others
- Leading & Motivating Staff
- Team Building
- **Course Dates: 5th and 30th November, 17th December and 21st January 2013**
- **Location: TBC**
- **Full Course Cost: £812 RDPE
Funded Cost: £245**

To book your place or find out more information, please call Lisa Forbes on 01270 613195 or email lisaforbes@reasheath.ac.uk

In partnership with:



Succession & Retirement Planning

We understand the importance of putting plans in place for the future of your family farming business and we have run a number of seminars on this topic. We also understand that this is a personal subject and business specific so funding is now available for one to one sessions.

For more general information, please come along to our next meeting:

- **Date: Tuesday 3rd July from 7:00pm – 9:30pm**
- **Location: Aqueduct Marina, Church Minshull**
- **Cost: £15**

To book a place or find out more about the one to one support that is available, please call Lisa Forbes on 01270 613195 or email lisaforbes@reasheath.ac.uk

In partnership with:



Solicitors and Notaries



Coaching for Farming Businesses

Do you want to make changes to your farm business but never find time to put plans into place?

What are the obstacles to change? Do you struggle delegating tasks to your team?

Is it easy to work with your family?

Are there never enough hours in the day?

Having the opportunity to discuss these common problems with a business coach could help you to fine tune ideas, prioritise and gain the confidence to make those changes and move your business forward.

To find out about the range of coaches and packages available, please call Lisa Forbes on 01270 613195 or email lisaforbes@reasheath.ac.uk

Skills for Rural Businesses

Find out how the Rural Development Programme for England can help you.

The Enterprise Delivery Hub at Reaseheath College can organise different training events to help meet your requirements. Below are some of the courses currently available (30% contribution from you business; 70% from the RDPE Skills Programme):

- **Managing your Rural Family Business** – inspiring owner managers to improve their management capabilities and providing confidence to ‘build a better business’ (6 half day sessions).

- **Hands-on Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn** – Delegates will be actively encouraged to utilise different social media channels within the context of their own business.

- **How to do your own PR** – Insider secrets about how to get media coverage for your business and spotting what makes a good news story in your daily routine.

- **Finance for Non-Financial Managers** – To enable you to deal more confidently with finance as it impacts on your role in the business and business financial planning – 2 half day sessions.

- **Book-keeping & Tax** – key information regarding what you need to know to manage your business effectively day to day and what records you need to keep – 2 half day sessions – specific sessions also available for farm businesses.

- **How to Improve your Sales Skills** – by effective questioning, satisfying objections, closing the deal and using demonstrations and effective goal setting.

- **How to improve your Telesales Skills** – by understanding and following a structured telesales procedure, recognise and manage issues that impact on the effectiveness of telesales activity and setting realistic objectives and manage motivation.

- **Appraisal training** – how does this contribute to a successful organisation and what does a successful performance management process look like to manage an effective review and achieve objectives?

Skills for Food Businesses

- **Mentoring Programme** – the mentor will engage with and challenge a food business to fulfil their true potential by exploring financial and operational status and completing an action plan.

For further details contact Anne Sharrott on 01270 616 450 or annes@reaseheath.ac.uk



Habitats and Hillforts

www.habitatsandhillforts.co.uk

Event List for Summer 2012 Grassland and Meadow Management

■ **Wednesday 4th July**
09.30am – 3.30pm
Broomy Bank

A one day training course looking at the management of species rich grassland and the creation of new wildflower meadows which will help to sustain and improve this important habitat.

Woodland Management

■ **Wednesday 12th September**
09.30am – 3.30pm
Meadow Bank Farm

A one day training course on Restoration and Management of Woodlands. Topics to be covered will include woodland management techniques, species selection, woodland management for dormice and the Cheshire Dormice Project, wood fuel and woodland grant schemes.

■ **Costs: £5 for Cheshire residents, £25 for Non-Cheshire**

For more information or to book a place contact Emily Welch on 01270 616464, emilyw@reaseheath.ac.uk

STOP PRESS...

Cheshire Grassland Society

- Research into practice farm walk
- Free open meeting – all welcome
- Reaseheath College Farm, Wednesday 4th July – 7pm

Demonstrations and trials on:

- Slurry and AD digestate for growing grass silage
- Sulphur for grazed grass
- Growing and using mixed forages with lucerne, maize, peas, wheat and barley

MEET AT COLLEGE FARM



GUEST ARTICLE

Digital Dermatitis – Under Control or Under the Radar?

Even if digital dermatitis isn't at the fore-front of the lameness problem on a farm, it is almost always lurking somewhere in the background. It is a highly infectious and painful condition and is often referred to as 'mastitis of the foot' due to the importance of the environment in controlling infection. Since it was first identified in the UK in the late 1980s extensive research has been carried out into the condition – Sara Pedersen brings us up to date with the latest information.

Cause

Digital dermatitis is caused by a group of bacteria called Treponemes. These are very active and mobile, allowing them to move rapidly within a wet environment making them highly contagious in the right conditions. There are three specific strains that have been found to cause digital dermatitis, all of which vary in their severity. If multiple strains are found then the lesion is likely to be more severe than if just one strain is involved. So even if you have digital dermatitis on your farm it is important to remember that there is the potential for purchased stock to bring in new strains.

Risk factors

There are multiple risk factors for digital dermatitis, however, the main ones relate to slurry management, since this appears to be the main way in which infection spreads from cow to cow. Slurry is also very irritating to the soft skin of the heel and can make it more susceptible to infection. Cubicle housing and automatic scrapers (Photo 1) increase the risk



Above: Sara Pedersen, Nantwich Farm Vets.



of infection, as do high stocking densities and increased standing times.

Signs

Digital dermatitis is an infection of the skin and can be found at many sites including the bulbs of the heel, interdigital space and coronary band (Photo 2). Affected cows are acutely lame and often

walk on their tip toes as they are reluctant to place the painful heel on the ground. The lesion itself is red raw and extremely painful (Photo 3). More advanced, chronic cases may appear like a 'hairy wart' and are often more difficult to treat.

Digital dermatitis has recently been found to infect sole ulcer or white line disease lesions, prolonging recovery times and in some instances preventing recovery all together – so called 'non-healing lesions'. If these cases are not treated quickly and effectively then the digital dermatitis can infect the underlying horn-producing corium (quick). In some instances infection can also spread to bone, either resulting in the production of 'spikes' on the underside of the pedal bone or eroding the bone itself. Non-healing lesions are fast becoming the most common reason why digit amputations are being performed, making the control of digital dermatitis more important than ever.

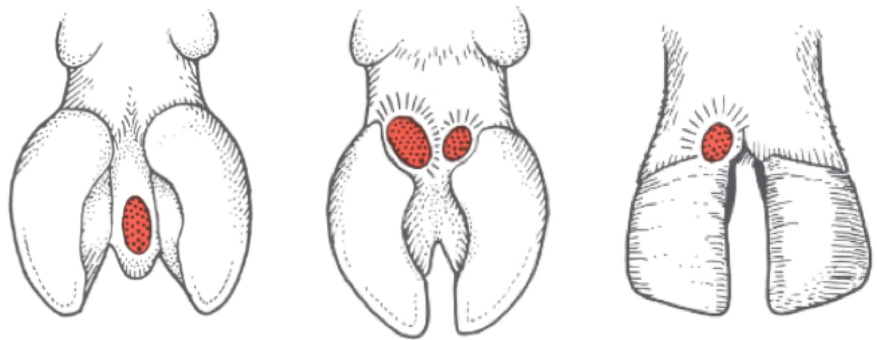


Photo 1: Automatic scrapers are a key risk factor for spreading digital dermatitis from cow to cow.

Treatment

Rather surprisingly, individual cases of digital dermatitis are easy to treat; it is the control at herd level that is particularly difficult. Individual cows should be treated as soon as possible by lifting the foot, debriding the lesion and

Photo 2: Typical sites where digital dermatitis is found (from Footcare in Cattle).



spraying with an antibiotic spray. The lesion should be sprayed twice, with the first layer given time to dry before the second is applied. Bandaging the lesion may seem preferable, however it can often exacerbate the infection if left on too long. Bandages create a warm, moist environment – exactly what digital dermatitis loves, so if you do bandage a cow's foot it must be removed within two days otherwise you will be back to square one.

Alongside early treatment of individual cases, regular footbathing is the key to controlling infection at herd level. However, it is important that ALL animals in the herd are included in the regime – milking AND dry cows, heifers, the bull and even youngstock if they too are infected. Footbath design is crucial to making the process easy for both yourselves and the cows and, more importantly, ensuring that you get the most out of your footbathing product. Length is critical as cows need to place each foot in the footbath at least twice and to ensure that the foot is completely immersed the footbath should be at least 10cm deep. A 'built in' concrete footbath is more comfortable for the cows as it will not move when they walk in it. A rubber lining has the same benefit aiding cow flow through the bath and helping reduce faecal contamination.

Footbathing products include antibiotics and skin disinfectants. Antibiotic footbaths can be useful

in the face of an outbreak but as there are no licensed products they must be used under veterinary guidance. As digital dermatitis is found deep in the skin it is really important that the feet are clean prior to the cow going through the footbath, otherwise the antibiotic will not reach the site of infection and it will not work.

There are many disinfectant products commonly used in footbaths, however, relatively few are actually proven to be effective at treating/preventing digital dermatitis; 5% Copper Sulphate, 3-5% Formalin and 5% Zinc Sulphate are different options. Peracetic acid and parlour washings are commonly used, however, they rarely get to the root of the problem when used alone.

It is clear that digital dermatitis continues to plague many herds and at a cost of £75-£80 per case can you afford not to get on top of it? ■



Photo 3: Digital dermatitis.

Information Hub

Love your staff, not just your animals!

Lisa Forbes, who manages the delivery of skills training for farmers, tells us why farm staff are as important to the success of a business as farm livestock. Lisa can help with training in all aspects of animal and people husbandry and can be contacted on 01270 613195.



Lisa Forbes, RADA.

At the RADA Dairy Sustainability Conference in December last year, the topic of 'value in the supply chain' was widely debated. As ever, there was focus on the milk price and the challenge of working alongside the "profit-hungry" retailers, but Karolina Klaskova of DairyCo provided us with the fact, based on MilkBench+ findings, that it is the cost of production on farm which accounts for 71% of variation in net margin - farm gate milk price only accounts for 7%.

The conclusion was that attention to detail in forage production and utilisation, and in people management are the most critical factors to achieving success. As a non-farmer and with my background in recruitment and change management, it is the recognition of the importance of people within the farm business which struck me the most and Ed Dale's comment that "we love our cows, but it is our people who drive and grow the business" which stayed with me.

■ **Managing people as well as cows**

The challenge for me has been to develop a range of people management courses which will stand up next to the animal health & welfare and nutrient management support that we already have in place through the RDPE Skills Programme. It's relatively easy to go back on farm and trim a foot better or understand your NVZ requirements better, but it is harder to go back and see the tangible benefits of more effective communication skills.

To ensure this can be done, we are working with industry specialists such as Alistair Gibb of Cedar Associates, a former dairy manager who has developed leadership programmes with DairyCo and BPEX. Alistair believes that "managing livestock or crops is easy relative to managing people, but it requires a different set of soft skills. If staff are under-utilised or not fulfilling their potential this ultimately impacts on business profitability".

Last winter we ran two programmes covering leading and motivating staff, effective communication and team building. Ed Dale was one of the farmers who attended and he says "It was excellent, the whole team benefitted. The funding makes this type of training accessible and opens your business to more people and tools that it can benefit from". David Craven of Grosvenor Farms feels that the course "has certainly made me re-assess my priorities and to utilise and involve the team I have under my control. Spending more time explaining our strategy and how it will roll out has allowed me to delegate more, freeing time up to concentrate on other issues."

■ **Opportunities for all**

A similar four day programme will run again this coming winter, plus we have sessions on Negotiating Skills and Instructional Techniques running over the summer. I am pleased that the response has been positive but it would be great for more farmers

to understand the importance of developing these leadership skills, not just for their benefit but for the industry as whole.

As an alternative to workshop training, RADA also has in place a panel of business coaches offering a range of one-to-one support packages. It can be difficult, as the Farm Manager, to put your development ahead of the day to day issues, so having someone independent from the business come in to discuss problems and opportunities and identify options and solutions to move forward with, at a time to fit around the hectic farming day, is a great scenario. It can also be a great tool if you are considering making changes to your business as it provides the opportunity to fine tune ideas and prioritise.

So, if you want to drive your business forward and take responsibility for improving net margin into your own hands, have a look at yourself and the people around you and the potential they have to develop. If your cows, cattle, or your chickens, sheep, turkeys or pigs for that matter, are happy and productive and your people are happy and productive, it could be a winning combination.

To find out more about our range of leadership courses, or to discuss the specific needs of your business, contact Lisa Forbes on 01270 613195 or email lisaforbes@reaseheath.ac.uk ■

Introducing the Reaseheath pig unit

It's not easy arranging on-farm workshops and training for pig farmers when the biosecurity rules are so tight. Lesley Innes who co-ordinates the Livestock North West Programme in Cheshire has got around this by using modern technology to make a 'virtual tour' of the Reaseheath unit, which she put together with new Pig Herd Manager Steve Compton and used at the first meeting of a new pig discussion group. Here's what the group learned from Steve about the unit.

Since June 2009 the Reaseheath pig unit has been operating as a 'Freedom Foods and RSPCA registered' high welfare unit. The unit has 150 breeding sows, the dam lines 'landrace' and the terminal sire 'large white' and 'landrace' cross. The average pigs to market are 120 each fortnight to Tulip Ltd and local butchers which includes H. Clewlow in Nantwich.



Above: Steve Compton, Reaseheath Pig Unit Manager.

■ Breeding herd

Serving – Currently there are 14 sows/gilts served in each batch, with the potential of farrowing down 12 sows/gilts. Steve joined in August 2011 and found that most of the herd was either too old or too fat. Currently every fortnight 12 replacement gilts are selected and put into the herd and at every batch serving 6 fresh gilts are served alongside the weaned sows. The sows are at present culled out at 6th parity but will eventually be culled at 5th parity. So with the present serving of gilts we have a 60% replacement rate which means that by this time next year we will have a brand new herd.

Sows are weaned on a Thursday and once they are on heat they have two servings, and we have seen

improvements in the conception rate. The sows are served on their first day which is Monday, and usually finished on a Wednesday.

Dry sows – The sows are now in a rota system and fed a ration for the stage of pregnancy they are at. This feeding regime eliminates the fat sow syndrome which is what this unit used to have. Doing this we have been able to use less of the dry sow ration which will help with reducing costs. Steve believes that by the introduction of a better regime, we will see a better viable pig born, better litter numbers and birth weights (pregnancy testing takes place at 4 and 8 weeks of pregnancy).

Farrowing – At birth the pigs are fostered into like sized groups (small pigs on one sow, larger pigs on another) and as long as the pigs are born alive, all sows hold 11 or 12 and all are good viable pigs. The pigs on the sows that are selected for gilts are ear-notched at this stage so there are no mistakes when pre-selecting at weaning.

Creep feeding is started at 8 days old in preparation for them to eat about a kilo each before weaning. This prevents scouring which in turn gives us a heavier pig. At weaning we are aiming for 10.5 kg per pig and with this heavier pig will get a boost, with pigs losing less weight in those first few crucial days. We have now installed new arc heaters and we are able to produce 11-12 pigs per sow in the spring/summer and 10-11 pigs in the winter. We have also installed fenders on the doorway of the arcs to prevent the pigs from jumping out in the first few days. With these improvements and the viscreen going up, we have been able to create a more productive environment. We are now aiming for at least 110-130 pigs with each weaning.

■ Feeding herd

Stage 1 (Up to 12 weeks of age) – Pigs are now going in at around 10.5 kg and are more uniform. This in turn is giving us a better start in the first few days of weaning. Gilts are now re-selected at weaning by putting an ear tag in to prevent mistakes. We have cut down the straw to less than half of previous usage, which has been helped by building kennels of straw for the pigs and keeping them warm. This has also helped the pigs gain extra weight by converting the food into weight and not just into keeping warm. We are now making more use of the nutrients in the food. At 12 weeks the pigs are now reaching a weight of 50-60 kg - an improvement from 40-45 kg this time last year.



Above: Finishing – Stage 1.

Stage 2 (Over 12 weeks of age) – By putting 60 kg pigs into this stage we can use a cheaper finisher ration after they have reached 70 kg. We are aiming to finish our pigs 2 weeks earlier than this unit has done before; in turn this will save money on feeding and bedding. Our breeding stock is selected every two weeks with a strict selection programme. Each stage is cleaned out once a week which helps to promote a better atmosphere and in turn better growth rates.

The next Livestock North West Pig Discussion Group Meeting

'The Summer Effect and Gilt Management'

■ **Date: 12th June 2012- 6.30pm refreshments & registration. Start 7pm - Finish 9.30pm including buffet.**

■ **Venue: John Platt Centre for Agriculture, Reaseheath College, Nantwich. ■**

Is On Farm AD Progressing?

Daniel Galloway, Reaseheath's Renewable Energy Officer, reflects in his blog on where we are up to with Anaerobic Digestion on dairy farms.

Reaseheath has been operating its AD plant for over a year now and I suppose initial expectations of the project were that everyone would want one, however, things don't always work out like that and we are still waiting for the Mr or Mrs Jones of this world to build their plants, before 'we' build one in envy. I can say now that I have met a few Mr/Mrs Jones and that AD is firmly on their radar, but waiting for the opportune time to strike. This blog follows the progress of Reaseheath's Anaerobic Digestion project and how we are helping Mr/Mrs Jones.

I should also say that Mr/Mrs Jones don't have to have a 1,000 cow unit or a vast amount of energy crops. They could have a 100 cow unit which handles their neighbour's poultry muck and before you know it, they have a viable AD plant.

■ Project progress

Spring has been a fairly interesting and hectic period thus far; scorching hot weather, snow, drought and flooding in some areas. However, life goes on and we've all got to pay the bills. The digester plant has been running relatively smoothly since an electrical fault was resolved on the plug and play macerator. This hasn't affected gas production much as the majority of the feedstock is fed through the Continually Stirred Tank Reactor (CSTR) digester. With young stock heading out for grazing for the summer period there will be a reduced amount of slurry, so we will be looking to utilise our solids feeder to increase input feedstocks and ultimately gas production from the plant. I will be following this with interest due to the amount of moving parts – the more moving parts you have the more that can go wrong.

We have a multitude of visitors round the plant every month, from farmers to bankers to the occasional Chinese delegation. When showing visitors around the digester if I see Mark Yearsley, our College Farm Manager, I always approach with a sense of caution. Ultimately, the digester can be the bane or the joy of his life. This all depends on whether he has to empty a pump full of slurry or

the digester is all singing and dancing producing electricity and cash. With Mark's bright rosy cheeks it's often hard to distinguish between the two from afar!

We held our first interactive AD clinic towards the back end of April, which was a tremendous success. From the feedback, I'm glad that people seemed to get two things from the session: 1. I can make some money out of this, and 2. Thank goodness I'm aware of the surrounding regulations and pitfalls before I start.

The day went right through the process of developing and operating a plant, to help delegates understand what they would need for their own plant. I am looking forward to my on farm visits to see if there are any projects we can help get off the ground.

■ Manure matters

After a slow start it now seems that we are actually getting some grass growth on our demonstration plots. Separate applications of slurry, digestate, fertiliser and a zero control have been made to a two hectare grass field. When putting together this demonstration trial we had many a conversation on how to run it, but we came to the conclusion that it has to resemble actual farming practice. So an appropriate choice of fertilisers and top dressings had to be made to keep within our NVZ regulations, as well as taking into consideration the P and K indices of the field. The cutting season will be delayed according to the weather, but we hope to provide some interesting results.

As part of the Anaerobic Digestion project, Reaseheath has been working with Farmgen, looking to support the development of AD in the region. Farmgen are looking to open their third large scale on farm plant in the region by the end of 2012 and have started doing their own demonstration plots on the same lines as the ones at Reaseheath. The more we can engage the wider farming community about the process, the greater the benefits for the North West farming region. It is encouraging to see even the larger developers wanting to be open about their business and what it can bring.



Above: Daniel Galloway.

■ Any other business

Like the youngstock going out to graze I'm off to pastures new, but have thoroughly enjoyed all the time I have spent at Reaseheath. I have taken a new role working in the commercial side of the on-farm AD world, so if you see me in passing say hello. I'd like to think the knowledge generated from the project will help you and I build and operate AD plants successfully over the coming years.

May will see the last of our digester plant tours until next September, but keep your eyes open for a summer interactive AD clinic. There are also quite a few interesting AD events coming up in the next few months that can really help you to understand how to successfully build and operate a plant.

WRAP event, Birmingham

Improving operations at AD facilities.

■ Date: 12th June ■ Cost: £ 30

Aqua Enviro conference, Nottingham

Operational experiences with full-scale anaerobic digestion plants treating food and farm derived waste in the UK.

■ Date: 21st June ■ Cost: £350

ADBA annual conference and exhibition. NEC, Birmingham

Day two of conference focussed on developing on farm AD.

■ Date: 4th – 5th July

■ Cost: Free entry to exhibition.

I wish everyone at Reaseheath College and especially those involved in RADA every success for the future. I'm proud to have worked for an organisation that passionately supports the development of farming and rural businesses. ■

Graham's Musings

Looking out from my study window, I watch a Holstein single-mindedly trying to reach the succulent leaves on the low branches of a Sycamore tree – nothing else seems to matter, the rest of her life being organised. If only things could always be so straightforward.

The last couple of weeks have thrown into sharp focus the fragility of our lives, I have been contacted on three separate occasions concerning unexpected deaths involving farming families and on a fourth, in relation to a severe accident. Each event was a tragedy, occurring suddenly and bringing with it a vocabulary of grief, a sense of loss and both private and business problems.

The people involved never expected what happened to occur – and consequently, their affairs were not complete. Wills should have been drawn, partnership matters could have been better structured, insurance arrangements might have been effected, long running issues resolved and Powers of Attorney executed; the list goes on. Whilst it may seem unattractive to incur professional fees on a periodic review of your affairs – not to have done so is even less attractive in a worst case scenario. So, whilst you have time, seize the moment and take action as soon as practicable.

Remember, Reaseheath College has courses and support programmes, including one on Succession Planning, which are both bespoke and cost effective.

Another matter that arose was in relation to divorce, something which again can happen unexpectedly. Interestingly, marital bliss tends to create an environment where arrangements involving the farming operation are not fully thought about until the marriage falters and only then are the problems of who has what considered in detail.

Try to sort out the residual matters now, as divorce and the



Above: Graham Gigg.

financial settlements that can follow tend to have a substantially detrimental effect on the farming operation. It is far better for the husbands and wives involved in extended farming families, where more than one generation or multiple family members are involved, to diplomatically address and resolve the issues of ownership and entitlement when life is running smoothly rather than wait until the air is charged with emotion.

I was fortunate enough to be invited by the partners of accountants Howard Worth to attend a private dinner at Peckforton Castle for their professional contacts, many of whom were associated with the farming industry. It was evident that the attendees came across as committed both to their respective professions and to their clients. It occurred to me that it must be reassuring for the farmers

of Cheshire and especially the dairy farmers, some of whom are the best in the world, to know that their professional advisors are dedicated to offering the best advice at all times.

As the busy Summer with silaging and shows are imminent, try to find time to consider your business strategy. Ensure that your present financial affairs including borrowings, pensions, insurances and tax mitigation strategies are included and that your accounting and legal matters are in good order and up to date. After that, like my Holstein, you could afford to be more relaxed and even venture into new pastures. ■



Solicitors and Notaries

Environment Advice

The Reaseheath Farm Environmental Services has expanded its activity; the following services can be offered to farmers and organisations. 70% funding support from RDPE Skills applies in many cases – contact the team to find out more:

SPECIES AND LANDSCAPE

- Advice and applications for Natural England's Entry Level Scheme
- Higher Level Scheme pre-application advice, Farm Environment Plans (FEPs) and applications
- Scheme planners and claim forms
- Woodland Grant schemes
- Cross Compliance guidance
- Hedgerow cutting plans
- General habitat and species management advice
- Great Crested Newt Surveys

FARM RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

- Soil management plans and Soil Protection Reviews
- Manure and nutrient management advice and plans
- PLANET training
- Nitrate Vulnerable Zones compliance
- Water pollution risk assessment and prevention advice
- Soil and manure sampling

ENERGY AND INNOVATION

- Wood fuels and woodland management
- Renewable energy and energy efficiency assessments
- Carbon footprinting and mitigation



Above: Rachel Price – Farm Conservation Advisor, Reaseheath Farm Environmental Services.



Above: Nicola Hall – Farm Conservation Advisor, Reaseheath Farm Environmental Services.

The team can be contacted on: 01270 613195



Market Monitor

DairyCo Datum.

Severe downward pressure on milk price

Wiseman, followed by Dairy Crest then Arla, reacted to falling commodity prices and have cut milk price by 2ppl for certain producers. Falling milk commodities and cream in particular have been cited as the cause.

For Dairy Crest the reduction is to around 575 of its farmers who don't supply either its retailer milk pools or its Davidstow contract. This reduction partially reverses the additional 3.95ppl Dairy Crest paid these farmers during 2011.

Dairy Crest has confirmed it will maintain the leading price paid to the farmers who supply its Davidstow creamery - home of the leading Cheddar brand Cathedral City.

Mike Sheldon, Group Milk Procurement Director for Dairy Crest stressed that Dairy Crest remains totally committed to its 1,300 dairy farmers. He also explained the importance of the £75 million investment programme within the dairies business, which had facilitated the consultation on the two site closures.

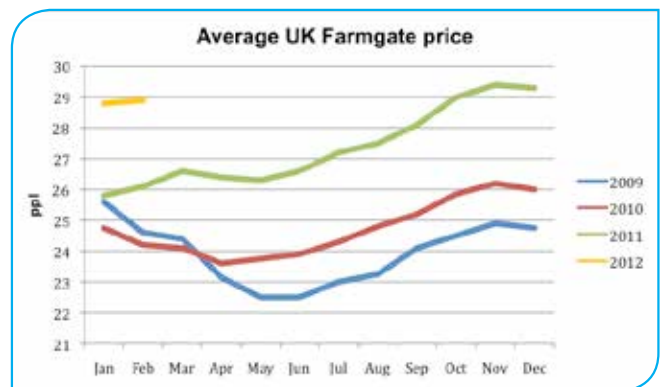
Farm leaders called for government to take action to stop processors locking producers into contracts where prices can be changed so quickly and easily.

NFU Dairy Board Chairman said, "The market place for milk at the farm gate is broken – too many farmers are held over a barrel by their processors because of the terms of their supply contract." Dei Davies, Milk Committee Chairman at the farmers' Union of Wales agreed, "They may be required to give 12 months' notice to pull out, but the price the farmer is paid can be changed at a few days' notice by the processor."

A DEFRA spokesperson commented, "Farmers need better bargaining power to generate a bigger share of the revenue, which is why we are fully behind the industry's work to produce a voluntary code of practice on contracts that will even out the balance of power."

First Milk in the sports drinks market

On 2 May, First Milk announced that it has bought sports nutrition company CNP Professional. CNP Professional, based in Manchester, markets and sells a broad range of products for the sports nutrition market.



In addition, CNP Professional also works directly with sportsmen and women across a wide variety of sports.

According to a press release, the decision to buy CNP Professional was in part due to its recent joint venture with Fonterra, looking at producing whey proteins to go into functional food products.

Sainsbury's launch new cost of production contract

Sainsbury's has announced that the Sainsbury's Dairy Development Group (SDDG) will be launching a new milk supply contract from 1 May for its farmers through Arla, Dairy Crest and Robert Wiseman Dairies. The new contract will be based on a cost of production model using figures supplied by the group of 324 farms through Kite Consulting.

Of interest is that in addition to the full annual review on 1 October, which will use costings data collected by Kite, SDDG will conduct quarterly reviews in January, April and July each year. At these reviews fuel, feed and fertiliser costs will be reviewed using figures published by DairyCo Datum.

Adjustments in each of these elements will be made as follows: average movement over three months for fuel, average movement in six months for feed and average

movement in 12 months for fertiliser. This means that the next review will be on 1 July 2012.

In context: *With the current volatility in market prices, the new contract should provide some stability in that it will be linked to costs of production. The SDDG model will also have the benefit of reacting to changes in input costs more frequently through the quarterly reviews. However, this contract will now mean that prices will move based on the cost of producing milk, not by the market value of milk. While there will be periods where the price paid will be above the market price, historical market trends demonstrate that there will also be times where this is not the case.* ■

Fonterra auction results reflect downturn in global commodity prices

Global commodity prices are continuing on a downward trajectory as supplies outpace demand. At the latest Fonterra auction held on 17 April, the all product Global Trade Index fell by 9.9% to US\$2,983/tonne. This is the biggest decline in percentage terms between auctions since July 2010. The Index has now fallen below its 10 year average to its lowest level since September 2009 when the world was recovering from the depths of the global recession.

With 20,000 tonnes of whole milk powder (WMP) on offer at the auction, prices fell 11% on average to \$3,098/tonne with nearby contracts showing the most weakness.

Skim milk powder (SMP) prices were down by 7.6% to an average of \$2,871/tonne with Arla Foods SMP sold at the lower end of this price range which is in line with current European SMP quotations. Analysts believe the latest price corrections are justified based on current international pricing.

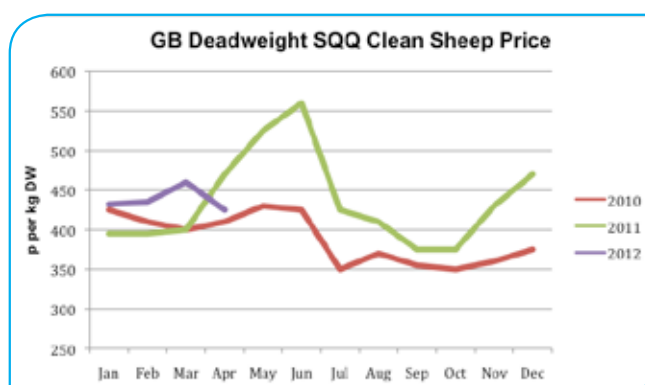
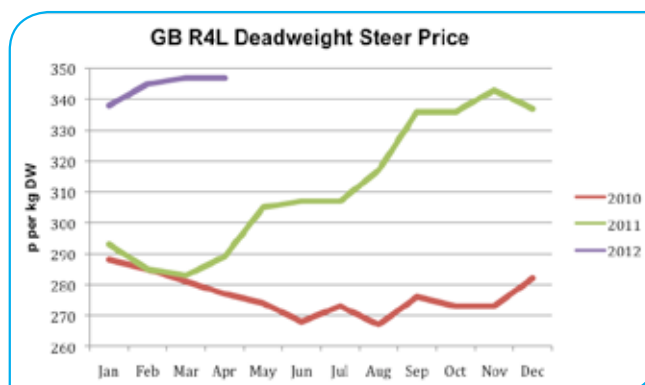
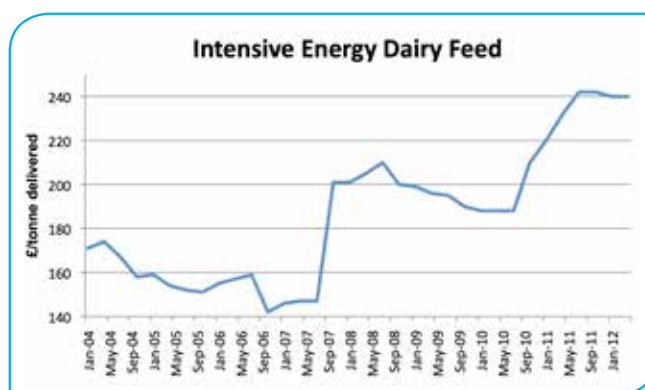
Retail brands under pressure from own label

In the current economic climate consumers are cost conscious and value for money remains a continuing theme. Supermarkets continue to invest heavily into expanding own-label ranges. According to UK food and grocery analysts IGD, price is currently at the forefront of consumer purchase decisions and there is a strong incentive for consumers to choose own label products over brands.

The grocery market as a whole has seen a shift from branded to own label products in the top four multiple retailers: Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrisons. This shift has not only seen shoppers' preferences switch to own label but has also seen them move down the tiers of own label from premium to standard and value lines (Kantar Worldpanel, 12 w/e 18/03/12).

Own label cheese accounts for 57.2% of sales by volume, growing by 2.8% year-on-year whereas branded cheese sales have seen slightly slower growth at 0.7% year-on-year. This trend is also mirrored in the butter category with the volume of own label butter sold increasing by +11.7% (52 w/e 18/03/12) over the previous year while branded butter sales are down by 2.7%.

However, the power of brands shouldn't be underestimated. Branded products continue to attract large scale investment from the companies who own them. As noted by IGD, 'shoppers continue to recognise the value of brands and some are willing to pay extra for their associated credentials'. Because consumers also look to minimise the risk this can mean that they will still favour known brands over own labels offering a price advantage. ■



Non-domestic energy prices

Quarterly energy prices are supplied from DECC, decc.gov.uk

Electricity

Scale	Q3 2011 price (p/kWh)	Q4 2011 price (p/kWh)	Change (%)
Very Small	12.11	13.37	+ 10.4
Small	10.17	10.64	+ 4.3
Small/Medium	8.79	9.32	+ 6.0
Medium	7.81	8.33	+ 6.7

Scale	Annual Consumption (MWh)
Very Small	0-20
Small	20-499
Small/Medium	500-1,999
Medium	2,000-1,9999

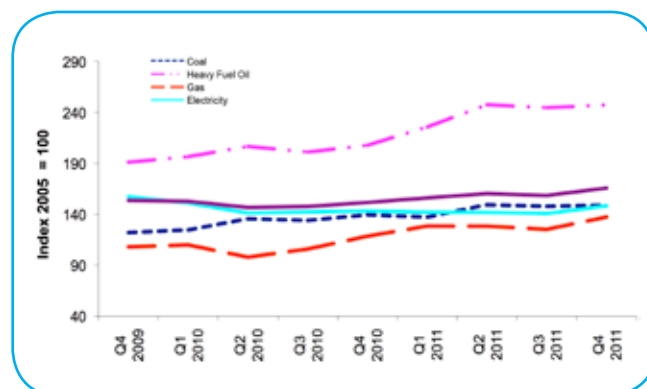
Gas

Scale	Q3 2011 price (p/kWh)	Q4 2011 price (p/kWh)	Change (%)
Very Small	3.427	3.687	+ 7.6
Small	2.647	2.930	+ 10.7
Medium	2.125	2.570	+ 20.9

Scale	Annual Consumption (MWh)
Very Small	< 278
Small	279-2,777
Medium	2,778-27,777

Note: 1 MWh = 1,000 kWh = 1 unit

Chart of Fuel Price Indices (Including Climate Change Levy) in Real Terms Q4 2009 to Q4 2011



Brent Crude Oil (USD/BBL)



Brent crude oil is sourced from the North Sea and is used to price 2/3 of the world's internationally traded oil supplies. It is therefore a good indicator for future energy and commodity prices.



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
Europe investing in rural areas



This project is supported by the Rural Development Programme for England, for which Defra is the Managing Authority, part financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas