

# promar matters

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## WELCOME:

Welcome to this edition of Promar Matters, our monthly publication for customers and industry influencers.

As a company, our aim is to work with customers to develop more robust businesses, helping them compete in their marketplace. The Promar Leading in Dairy scheme is a new approach designed to help dairy farmers plot the most suitable route forward based on a detailed assessment of the business and its objectives. We would welcome the opportunity to help you formulate the way forward for your business, so please contact us on 01270 616 800 to find exactly how we can help and to discuss a free initial visit.

Alternatively, if you are coming to the Livestock Event on 6th/7th July, please call and see us on stand GE54 and we would be happy to discuss the challenges facing your business and how we can help develop the most appropriate strategy for your circumstances.



James Dunn  
Promar Managing Director

## IN OR OUT? IT'S DECISION TIME

Promar Principal Consultant, Matt Sheehan suggests the EU Referendum will be a close call.

June 23rd will soon be upon us, and with it the chance to vote to decide whether we remain in, or leave the EU. It is an important vote with significant implications for the whole country as well as for the dairy industry.

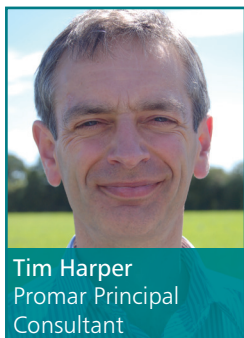
On a national basis, the decision will affect the economy, immigration and the overall Government budget. The 'In' campaign predict reduced economic growth pointing to the significant proportion of trade done with the EU countries and the difficulties that will arise if we leave. The 'Out' campaign tells us that unshackled by the EU we will be able to trade more easily with the rest of the world while not losing our nearest market.



The 'Out' campaign also say that by saving our contribution to the EU, more funds will be available for essential services and, according to some commentators to allow larger and more targeted farm support payments.

The campaign has been characterised by claim and counter-claim making it very difficult to predict which way the vote will go. One thing we can be sure of, however, is that whichever way the referendum goes, it will not by itself resolve the current milk price crisis which requires significant change on the global stage.

# COPING IN TOUGH TIMES



Dealing with a crisis or an unexpected situation can raise stress levels. Tim Harper, Promar Principal Consultant

considers what can be done to help ease the burden.

High or prolonged levels of stress can affect people's health and their ability to make good, balanced decisions. All farmers have been affected by the ongoing milk price cuts and the prolonged period of depressed prices. Our experience is that everyone will be impacted differently depending on their situation.

Farmers with more experience may feel like they are in a better position to cope, while those who have recently gone into farming may find the situation more stressful or damaging. But everyone will be affected differently based on individual circumstances.

Talking to someone who has been through the experience before, whether it is a farmer or your consultant who can provide support or advice, is a good way to gain some insight and perspective on the situation. The worst thing you can do is bottle the problem up and think you are the only one going through this situation.

There are also strategies that can be put in place to help deal with the unexpected or stressful situations like those that are currently being experienced.

## Solutions to help you get through

There are broadly two different types of strategy that can be employed, and through the Leading in Dairy initiative we have been helping clients adopt both types, depending on their circumstances.

A **solution strategy** is about having the ability to adapt and make changes that will help you cope with a difficult situation when it occurs.

Key components include:

- Being solution focused – prepare a plan that identifies problems and identifies possible solutions to them. There is usually more than one solution
- Seek advice – get help and advice from mentors, business consultants, bank managers and other professionals on the best way to cut costs and reduce overheads
- Stay connected – get together with other farmers to share solutions (and frustrations). Discussion groups are a great way to share ideas and learn something new
- Keep a perspective – continue to make time for interests outside of farming that will provide enjoyment, relaxation and a chance to spend time with family and friends

A **prevention strategy** is about putting actions in place to minimise the effect of a difficult event or stressful time before it occurs. Using the drop in milk price as an example, the following things could be included in a prevention strategy:

- Stay up-to-date through the news, accountants and consultants to have the most notice of any impending changes
- When making decisions, always think long-term as well as short term and how the decision could be affected by a change in milk price, in either direction. For example if you change something today to save costs it could have an impact on fertility meaning you have fewer fresh calved cows to exploit a future milk price rise

- Have a budget, monitor it and operate within it. This will allow you to track progress and future changes. Clients on FBA have access to detailed breakdown of costs to help really monitor progress

- Put systems in place so the farm can run efficiently when fewer resources are available

In many cases the two strategy types can overlap. The most important thing is that a plan exists allowing the impact of change on the business to be assessed and changes implemented in a considered way.

The AHDB Decisions4Dairy meetings can help you assess the different business options available to you, to consider your business and the impact of different scenarios. Alternatively our consultants can help you work through the options on your own farm.

## If you are struggling to cope

If the pressure becomes too much and you are struggling to cope, it is important to get help. It is not a sign of weakness to talk to someone you trust or to contact a professional helpline.

If you are worried about your own health, or the health of someone else, contact one of the support services below sooner rather than later. Useful numbers are:

**Farming Community Network** -  
0845 367 9990

**The Addington Fund** -  
01926 620135

**R.A.B.I** -  
0300 303 7373

**Rural support (Northern Ireland)** -  
0845 606 7607

We are currently working closely with RABI to provide budgeting and appraisal support to help farming businesses plot the most viable route forward.