

WELCOME

James Dunn, Managing Director of Promar International



Welcome to the July edition of Promar Matters. This month we consider two key elements that drive a sustainable dairy industry - producing milk efficiently and investing in the young farmers of the future.

When 30%, or more, of on-farm costs are driven by purchased feed, it is of huge

importance to maximise the milk that can be produced by forage. Paul Henman considers the technical and practical steps that can be taken.

Investing in the future of farming is a responsibility of the entire agricultural industry, and is a core value of the Promar business. On farm, this can manifest itself in a number of ways, however, investment in people often results in the best possible return. At a farm level, we have pioneered this

people-focused approach with our Dairy Management Academy for over five years.

In this issue, we learn more about the Tesco's Future Farmer Foundation – a programme delivered by Promar on behalf of Tesco, investing in young people with a real passion for the future of the industry.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Promar Matters, and please contact us if you would like to discuss any of the areas covered in more detail.

HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO ACHIEVE MORE PROFIT



Maximising forage intake can dramatically improve the bottom line, but there remains a huge variation in reported milk from forage values across the industry. Paul Henman investigates some initial practical steps that can be taken in pursuit of that extra sustainable profit.

"It's widely acknowledged that many UK dairy farmers could be producing up to an additional 1,000 litres more per cow from forage," explains Paul Henman, Principal Consultant at Promar International.

One action of many to achieve this improvement is to focus on effective concentrate use, but he warns that while a reduction in concentrate feed can achieve more milk from forage, it is

important to take a targeted approach to avoid adversely affecting milk yields.

"The biggest opportunity to reduce the level of concentrate fed is during late lactation, and more specifically from 200 days post-calving. During this period, it's possible to replace concentrate feed with forage. Typically, 1kg of fresh weighted concentrate could be substituted with 3 to 4kg of fresh weighted good quality silage.

"With purchased feed typically contributing to a staggering one-third of on-farm costs, an improvement on yield from forage of 500 litres, is estimated to be worth between £25 to £35 per cow extra profit after all trading expenditure costs, but excluding any associated capital costs."

While the average UK dairy farmer achieves 2,500 litres from forage, a number of farms are achieving 4,500 litres

from forage, irrespective of total yields per cow. These range from herds producing over 10,000 litres per cow in total, down to herds producing 4,500 litres per cow in total, and located in many different parts of the country.

Mr Henman explains how by ensuring good quality grass or silage is fed, and with careful, purposeful management, 3,500 litres from forage should be attainable for most producers. "For a housed herd, the average quality of first cut grass silage is approximately 10.5 Metabolisable Energy (ME), and therefore if you assume a modest forage intake of 12kg dry matter, this should equate to production from forage of 10 to 11 litres of milk per day, or approximately 3,300 litres per 305-day lactation. The same principles would apply to grazed herds."

PTO...

HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO ACHIEVE MORE PROFIT... CONTINUED

Where to start

The first thing for those who have average or below litres from forage, is to gain confidence that they can achieve more.

"Farmers could start by challenging the feed rate of post-calved 200 day cows, and reducing the amount of concentrate

by just 0.5kg per day," explains Mr Henman.

"There are several other factors that affect yield, which all need to be managed effectively, but to an extent this approach can work for every dairy farmer – irrespective of system.

"With the support of others, such as your Promar consultant, start building the confidence that an increase in milk from forage, and hence increased profit can be achieved. Even a small change in diet can have a huge influence over profitability."

ARE YOU A TESCO FUTURE FARMER?

Lizzie Bonsall, agri-food consultant at Promar, manages the Tesco's Future Farmer Foundation programme on behalf of Tesco. Here, we find out more about how the scheme, and how other ambitious young farmers can apply.

The search is on for the next 50 young farmers to take part in the Tesco's Future Farmer Foundation programme. The initiative has been driven by Tesco over the last four years, and provides investment in to the future of UK and Irish agriculture and aquaculture, to help advance these young farmers through personal development.

Kenna Murdoch, Agricultural Adviser at Tesco, explains the benefits of the programme, and urges young farmers from across the sector to get involved.

"The programme provides a development opportunity for aspiring individuals in the farming and fishery sectors, on a practical and theoretical level. It includes five core skill workshops across the year, and a wide selection of supply chain visits to major businesses and industry placements. We also pair students with an industry mentor."

James Yeomans, a dairy farm manager based in Much Wenlock, Shropshire, and Tesco Future Farmer of 2016, shares the improvements he has made as a result of the programme.

"At Poplars Farm we milk 400 Friesian-Jersey crosses, on a spring block calving, New-Zealand style system with an average milk yield of 4,700 litres, and all milk is supplied to Arla.

"The programme appealed to me, as I was interested in improving my business

skills, and having the opportunity to learn outside of the day-to-day management of the dairy farm.

"The supply chain visits were invaluable and a key take home for me, was following a visit to the Weetabix factory, where they followed the principles of 'lean management'.

"As a young farmer running a big dairy unit, I'd previously tried to do everything myself, but I was under-staffed and struggling to manage. However, I realised an opportunity to apply the same lean management principles back on the farm.

"Since January this year, I've implemented KPI whiteboards across all areas of the farm including the milking, youngstock and for fertiliser usage, and have started sharing more of the daily workload with others. This allows me to focus on the management, while getting everyone else involved in monitoring and improving performance in their area.

"All of the farm's employees feel empowered to make decisions, and can actively influence change, and improve performance by using these KPIs to trim any waste.

"For example, by recording bactoscan and cell count levels, we know exactly what the optimum chemical concentration in our wash down routine should be. As a result of these efficiencies, we've cut chemical costs by 10%.

"Through attention to detail to the whole parlour routine, we've also reduced our cell count and bactoscan levels by 33% and 23% respectively.

"The Tesco Future Farmers programme was a fantastic opportunity to network

with a group of proactive, likeminded and ambitious individuals, and I'd highly recommend it to anyone who's looking to take the next step in their career and develop their skills."

Applications are open now until 29 September 2017. For qualification criteria and to apply please visit www.tescofuturefarmerfoundation.com or email Lizzie Bonsall at Promar via lizzie.bonsall@tescofuturefarmerfoundation.co.uk

Congratulations to our 2016 client survey winners



Congratulations to Mr and Mrs Marks from Totters Farm in Hampshire, for winning our annual client survey draw, and a fantastic prize of a weekend away worth up to £300.

We really value all customer feedback, as it's an invaluable part of continually improving our service. As a result of your feedback, we will be making improvements to our Farm Business Accounts programme over the coming few months, so please watch this space for that and other developments.

Photo L – R: Senior Farm Business Secretary, Sue Gale, presenting Mr and Mrs Marks with their prize