

WELCOME James Dunn, Managing Director of Promar International



Welcome to the November edition of Promar Matters.

This month we look at two examples of how attention to detail can be so important when striving for maximum returns from the dairy herd.

We visit the Southern regional finalist of the Milkfinder Manager of the Year award, the Banfield family, and illustrate how it is very easy to take your eye off

the ball when it comes to feed rates and maximising yield from forage.

Secondly, Richard Hooson considers the importance of thermophilic bacteria and how they can go unnoticed without regular assessment of parlour hygiene and wash cycle tests.

Milk prices are currently in a good place but commodity markets and production volume statistics suggest that they are likely to once again turn south at some point. Maximising returns from your milk contract and producing milk as efficiently

as possible remain key profit drivers for successful dairy farm businesses.

I hope you enjoy the read and please contact us if you would like to discuss any of the areas covered in more detail.

Events

Come along and meet the Promar team at the following upcoming event:

15th November – AgriScot

IMPROVED FEED EFFICIENCY SEES DIRECT FINANCIAL RETURN



As we enter the traditional housed period, producers are reminded to keep an eye on diet inputs as huge cost savings can be made, as one dairy business found out.

Following a diet reformulation, father and son, Francis and Paul Banfield, have created a saving of nearly £20,000 on purchased feed per year.

Despite consistently achieving average yields of over 7,000 litres for several years, Promar's Principal Consultant Paul Henman, who's been working closely with the enterprise for a number of years, felt the dairy enterprise could push for higher results from forage.

"The farm had previously been achieving around 3,400 litres from forage, which accounts for around 47% of the total yield," explains Paul.

"Although this is a substantial figure, their performance results didn't reflect the quality of forage being made."

Paul adds that the farm was feeding high levels of concentrate throughout the lactation cycle which was capping yield from forage. "After careful analysis of the ration, changes were made last winter and a reduction in concentrate being fed, during the mid to late lactation period, was implemented.

"One year on, the results have been outstanding, with yield from forage increasing by over 1,000 litres, equating to an impressive 60% of total yield, and a lift in overall milk solids, to reach 4.39% butterfat and 3.51% protein. This reduction in concentrate feed has seen a significant saving of nearly £90/cow per year for the business," says Paul.

He adds that Francis and Paul have also seen an improvement in cow fertility, and are now achieving an all service conception rate of 50%. "These impressive figures show the improvements that can be made through diet reformulation," says Paul.



Paul and Francis Banfield, and James Dunn

In addition to a reduction in feed costs and improved fertility, impressive teamwork between the family and their staff has enabled the business to prosper. This was recognised when the farm was recently named Southern regional finalist of the Milkfinder Manager of the Year 2017 award.

"Francis and Paul work in conjunction with their herdsman Simon to make business decisions, and ensure all employees across the farm business are well-informed. It's this approach that will ensure the continued success of the business."

**Paul Henman, 07971 119034,
paul.henman@genusplc.com**

AVOID PENALTIES FROM THERMODURIC BACTERIA



With increased pressure from some processors to reduce thermoduric bacteria levels within liquid milk or risk facing penalties, producers with low bactoscan levels shouldn't assume they're covered, explains Promar's Principal Consultant, Richard Hooson.

"Thermoduric bacteria are a specific group of microorganisms that are able to survive the milk pasteurisation process. This can result in quality issues in dairy products, such as reduced shelf life and 'off' flavours produced by the bacteria, and consequently, retailers are placing increased pressure on the supply chain to address the issue.

"The main factor contributing to thermoduric bacteria levels on-farm is in-parlour cleanliness, but producers

shouldn't take the traditional measure of a low bactoscan count as proof of a low level of thermoduric bacteria.

"National Milk Laboratories (NML) data has shown that from a random sample of British dairy farms, 3% have low bactoscan results but high thermoduric levels, indicating that a bactoscan result alone doesn't tell the whole picture."

Although most producers will have an established parlour routine for teat preparation, failure to sterilise the milking equipment correctly allows residues to build up, providing the perfect habitat for bacteria to thrive, explains Richard.

"Failing to reach a water temperature of 70°C during the wash cycle in the parlour, is a major contributor to high bacteria levels. We often see that hot water volume hasn't been increased following a parlour extension, meaning that the temperature of the plant isn't adequate to kill the bacteria in the system.

"Similarly, incorrect calibration of auto-wash systems can also result in hot water not circulating for long enough, providing the perfect breeding ground for bacteria.

"There are a number of potential indicators to high thermoduric bacteria levels, but one way of quickly identifying if there's a problem in your system is through a Genus static milk machine test. We have the equipment to detect all air leaks and measure vacuum reserve, both of which are key factors in the fight against thermoduric bacteria."

Top tips to reduce thermoduric bacteria:

- Request a Genus wash cycle test to assess your plant washing settings, and procedures
- Ask your milk buyer or laboratory to do a bulk milk bacteriology test to understand any unusual bacteria levels
- Use Genus temperature indicator stickers to easily identify if the water in the system is reaching 70°C (£6 per pair)

Richard Hooson, 07971 119121,
Richard.Hooson@genusplc.com



Parlour hygiene is key