

Brexit

# Preparing for Brexit

*Despite the considerable uncertainty surrounding what happens after 29 March, there is still much that companies can do to prepare, as Promar International's divisional director John Giles explains*



**E**ven at this relatively late stage, it is still not totally clear as to what sort of Brexit we might end up with, and there will almost certainly be several more twists and turns in the negotiating process before we get to 29 March.

In these circumstances, it can be difficult for businesses in the fruit and vegetable sector to know what to do - but at the same time, doing nothing does not seem to be an option. Time and effort can be spent in trying to work out what might or might not happen of course, but the clock is well and truly ticking. Attempting to understand what the final outcome will look like might well be a frustrating process.

In these circumstances, difficult and unpalatable though it might be, preparing for a situation of "what might be the worst thing that can happen" seems sensible. Every business will be slightly different, depending on the nature of the suppliers and customers it deals with, but there are several things that all businesses should be thinking about. Some of these are to be done in the very short term and others might need a more mid to long-term perspec-

tive, but they still need to be factored in to the overall equation.

A check list of areas that fresh produce firms should be taking into consideration should include the following:

- **Think about currency** - it is quite likely that in the build up to 29 March and afterwards, sterling could fluctuate against key currencies, such as the euro and the US dollar. In an industry with tight operating margins, an adverse movement could have a negative impact on profits. Thinking about hedging funds over the short and medium term to protect these would seem sensible, even if it is expensive.

- **Talk to customers and suppliers** - sharing Brexit plans with customers and suppliers seems an obvious thing to do. They will probably be thinking about the same sort of things and might also be able to share what is emerging as best practice from other supply chains. This really is a case of one plus one equals three.

- **Talk to staff** - share what your plans

are for the business in what might be the worst-case scenario and gain their buy-in and support. Everyone is concerned about what might happen post 29 March. Be open and frank with staff about what plans are being made for this. With east European and other non-UK staff in particular, discuss with them how they are feeling about the whole Brexit process and reassure them of their value and importance to the business overall.

- **Understand tariffs and customs clearance procedures** - these could all easily change after 29 March. There is a lot of information being produced by the government on this and keeping abreast of it is essential if companies are not to be caught out.

- **Discuss with other suppliers** - beyond the actual supply of produce, check where other key inputs and supplies come from - packaging, labelling etc. Are they UK sourced or do they come from outside the UK? What plans are your suppliers making for the period immediately after 29 March? Can you work with them to develop joint projects to minimise any potential problems?

- **Think about UK-based growers** - as part of the Brexit process, we will exit the Common Agricultural Policy. This will be replaced in time by a new UK Agricultural Bill. The



**John Giles**

*Promar International*

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LEFT—The fresh produce industry can take steps to prepare for Brexit, says John Giles

“ Banks are there to help and advise and are also dealing with lots of other businesses in a similar situation vis-a-vis Brexit ”

of what the customer base will look like in the future and how it will be supplied.

• **Talk to the bank** - many of these actions will have a financial impact on the business, be it in the short-to-medium and even longer term. Talking to the bank is essential to plan for what might happen to the business in the immediate period after 29 March and beyond. Banks are there to help and advise and are also dealing with lots of other businesses in a similar situation vis-a-vis Brexit. Talking to them and sharing ideas can only be positive.

Together, these factors will produce what we at Promar have referred to in the past as a “heady cocktail” of influences that will continue to shape the future direction of the market for fresh produce. We see no reason why these will be diminished in the post-Brexit period and beyond. Change is happening at a pace not seen before in the produce sector. There is a need to be better informed about the threats that these might well bring - as well as in many cases, the opportunities too. Where we will be by the end of 2019, in some cases it is difficult to tell, but in other areas, the evidence for the direction of change is compelling. Keeping on top of all of this is a demanding task, and not least, is where companies such as Promar can help. — **FPB**

fine detail of this has yet to be decided, but the direction of travel in it is clear for the mid to long term: less financial support for producing, but more support for environmental enhancement. How will this impact on the growers you work with? Are they ready for this and what can you do to work with them towards this new emphasis on the environment? Horticulture has traditionally received less financial support from the CAP compared to other sectors of UK agriculture, but the emphasis on the environment will be just as strong in the future for fruit and vegetable producers.

• **Talk to labour providers** - there is still a lack of clarity as to how many non-UK farm workers and others in the supply chain might be allowed in to the UK post-Brexit and for how long. Talking to the labour agency providers about how they see this evolving and working out what can be done as a result seems a real priority.

• **Review R&D priorities** - taking into account potential problems with labour availability, the future use of automation and robotics has to be very much on the agenda. In many cases, the technology already exists to do this, but the cost of uptake has often proved to be a barrier. Developing a plan for this is not a short-term thing and companies should be looking at what constitutes best practice in other areas of agriculture and food, as well as in other industrial sectors to see what is achievable and over what period of time.

• **Update strategy** - the next few years will almost certainly see a more volatile trading environment, with the possibility of new tariff and non-tariff barriers in place and the general economy all being more uncertain. This is as good a time as any to review the real core competencies of the business, identify key trends that will impact on it over the next three to five years, regardless of Brexit, and have a well-developed view



The online publication for buyers  
of fresh fruits and vegetables

CONVERSATION • INSIGHT • INNOVATION • ANALYSIS

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# Fresh Careers Fair secures stellar line-up of food industry experts to inspire attendees

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by Gill McShane

26 February 2019

Sixteen prominent industry professionals from the UK's fresh produce and foodservice sectors have pledged their support for The Fresh Careers Fair taking place next month on March 13, where they will participate as either mentors or panelists in a Dragon's Den-style competition at the annual fresh food and drink recruitment event in London.

The mentors will provide the students, graduates, jobseekers and career changers in attendance with free career guidance and on-the-spot introductions to exhibiting employers, while the so-called 'dragons' will give attendees the chance to practise their interview technique and pitch their career goals for expert and inspirational feedback.

Making up the panel of fresh produce dragons are some of the trade's longest-serving professionals:

- **Christopher Mack**, Chairman of Fresca Group
- **Nigel Jenney**, Chief Executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC)
- **Karen Sharples**, HR Director UK Wholesale Division for Total Produce, who is sharing the role with colleague **Sarah Trowbridge**, HR Director UK Retail Division for Total Produce.

Equally, the foodservice dragon panel features three key specialists representing the breadth of the industry:

- **Sharon Linney**, Operations Director for Lusso
- **David Cole**, Head of Catering at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
- **Carol Borhani**, Director of Angel Human Resources

For the Meet-a-Mentor programme, sponsored by AC Goatham & Son, the participants confirmed to date comprise leading fresh produce growers, marketers and consultants, including:

- **Amy Lance**, Head of Business Development at Berry Gardens
- **George Beach**, Founder of Mudwalls Farm
- **George Smith**, Founder of Midsummer Marketing
- **John Giles**, Divisional Director at Promar International
- **Tony Ganio**, Managing Director of Back to Roots
- **Will Sibley**, Apprentice Master of The Worshipful Company of Fruiterers

The mentors representing the foodservice sector currently include experienced specialists:

- **Alex Maynard**, HR & Resourcing Specialist for Hospitality at Harrods
- **Adria Wu**, Natural Chef and Founder of Maple and Co.
- **Ceri Radford**, Recruitment and Training Executive for Admiral Taverns

The Fresh Careers Fair is the exclusive recruitment event where leading fresh food and drink employers connect with new talent. Growing in popularity each year, the fourth edition of the fair moves to the **Business Design Centre** in Islington, London, on March 13, 2019.

Hannah Gorvin, Chief Marketing Officer for The Fresh Careers Fair, comments: "The Fresh Careers Fair is thrilled to announce this stellar line-up of 16 highly-experienced fresh produce and foodservice industry leaders as our mentors and dragons confirmed so far for this year.

"Their insight and advice for attendees will be invaluable at a time when both the fresh produce and foodservice sectors are seeking to raise awareness of the numerous excellent careers opportunities in their respective industries.

"Our hugely popular Dragon's Den-style competition attracts a high calibre of people looking to gain fantastic careers guidance and job-seeking tips from a panel of friendly 'dragons' working in either the produce or foodservice industries, depending on the candidate's career aspirations.

"Following a short two-to-three-minute pitch, participants have the unique opportunity to receive honest and constructive feedback on both their interview technique and their career progression from our experts. What's more, the best pitch wins an iPad mini!

"In addition, our Meet-a-Mentor programme is always a winner with attendees because they gain bespoke and on-the-spot guidance for the day and beyond. All our mentors have a breadth of knowledge and experience of the industry, which means they are ideally positioned to make introductions with prospective employers, and suggestions for future career paths."

The Fresh Careers Fair (FCF) is hosted by the organisers of the award-winning **The London Produce Show and Conference**, which takes place on June 5-7, 2019.

This year's FCF headline sponsors are: **The Worshipful Company of Fruiterers** and the **Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC)**.

Read the *PBUK* article about the exciting competitions being offered at this year's FCF by **The Worshipful Company of Fruiterers** [here](#).

The Fresh Careers Fair  
Wednesday 13 March 2019  
Business Design Centre  
52 Upper St, London, N1 0QH

- The Fresh Careers Fair 2019 opens at 9.15am and closes at 4pm on Wednesday March 13, at the Business Design Centre in Islington, North London.
- To exhibit or sponsor at the event, email Linda Bloomfield: [linda.bloomfield@producebusinessuk.com](mailto:linda.bloomfield@producebusinessuk.com) or call +44 (0)7711 509709
- Students and their tutor can register to attend free of charge at [www.freshcareersfair.co.uk](http://www.freshcareersfair.co.uk)
- For further information, and to download the full brochure, visit the event website [www.freshcareersfair.co.uk](http://www.freshcareersfair.co.uk)

The Packer (online)  
8<sup>th</sup> March 2019  
John Giles

## A Brexit checklist for U.S. fruit exporters

John Giles (/guest-  
author/john-giles)

March 8, 2019 09:06 AM

**John Giles**  
Promar International



We are on the virtual eve of the decision for the UK to leave the EU. Even at this relatively late stage, it is not fully clear as to what sort of Brexit we might end up with. In these circumstances, it can be difficult for U.S. fruit export businesses to know what to do. Preparing for a situation of “what might be the worst thing that can happen” seems sensible.

A “check list” of some areas that U.S. and, indeed, other international fresh produce firms should be taking into consideration should probably include as follows:

- **Lobby government** — The situation regarding market access to the UK could well change post-March. The fact the UK will, in time, be able to negotiate its own trade deals, might mean there is an opportunity for U.S. to gain better access than it now has.
- **Think about currency** — It is quite likely that in the build-up to March 29 and afterward, the pound could fluctuate against key currencies such as the U.S. dollar. Thinking about hedging funds over the short and medium term to protect these would seem sensible.
- **Talk to customers** — They will probably be thinking about the same sort of things and might also be able to share what is emerging as best practise from other supply chains.
- **Understand tariffs and customs clearance procedures** — These could all easily change after March 29. Lots of information is being produced by the UK government on this. Not least, in a very worst-case scenario, produce being shipped via other EU markets might attract a tariff. U.S. exporters should be checking on logistics to supply the UK market on a direct basis.
- **Understand consumer and customer behavior** — Even aside from the Brexit process, the UK market has gone through a fundamental change in the past 5-8 years. U.S. exporters should make the upmost effort to understand what is happening in the UK market on a regular basis.
- **Consider other markets** — While there are still many factors that will make the UK an attractive market for U.S.-based exporters, this might be also an opportunity to assess where the UK fits into an overall export portfolio. Building new markets takes time and effort, and as a result, this sort of review should be carried out on a regular basis.
- **Benchmark** — Regardless of what sort of Brexit prevails, U.S. exporters are competing against many other suppliers from the likes of Chile, Peru, India, Argentina and Mexico, to name a few. Engaging in benchmarking against other countries in terms of varietal mix, costs of production, export logistics and marketing and promotional activity should be carried out on a regular basis against other suppliers.

There is a need to be better informed about the threats that the UK market might well bring, as well as, in many cases, the opportunities, too. Where will we be by the end of 2019? In some cases, it is difficult to tell, but in other areas, the evidence for the direction of change is compelling.

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## BUSINESS MAKING TAX DIGITAL

With the deadline looming for the first stage of HMRC's Making Tax Digital plan, **Alex Black** looks at what changes need to be made in the farm office.

# Deadline approaches for digital switchover

### ▶▶ Farmers need to subscribe to MTD

TIME is running out for businesses to get ready for Making Tax Digital (MTD), with the deadline of April 1 looming.

While information businesses need to provide is not set to change, the digital switch does mean major changes to the way those working on spreadsheets or on paper file their accounts.

It could also offer opportunities for businesses looking to become 'more professional', with access to real-time account information and opportunities to benchmark and forecast with it.

All VAT-registered businesses with a turnover above the £85,000 threshold have to comply.

And for those not covered by this initial rollout in April, it could also be time to consider getting compliant, rather than waiting until the last minute when their business was required to make the switch.

But many businesses seemed to be unaware of exactly what was required for MTD.

Tryphena James, Promar UK farm business accounts manager, said the scheme significantly changed the way VAT records had to be kept and the way returns were submitted.

The infographic on the computer monitor displays the following information:

- Businesses can sign up at **gov.uk**
- Information kept in VAT account must be held digitally and VAT returns must be submitted digitally
- The deadline is **April 1, 2019**
- HOW THE MTD INITIATIVE WILL AFFECT YOU**
- VAT-registered businesses with a turnover of more than **£85,000** must be compliant. You can still join voluntarily.

SOURCE: HMRC

"In simple terms, under the MTD scheme all records required for completion of the VAT return must be kept digitally on what is described as functional compatible software," she said.

"You will no longer be able to maintain a manual cash book and

use this to prepare your VAT return."

With the scheme scheduled to go live on April 1, she said businesses needed to ensure they were compliant by the end of March.

"The MTD VAT rules apply to the first VAT period starting on or after April 1, 2019," she said.

"For monthly VAT returns, the April 2019 VAT return figures will be the first to be submitted digitally.

"For quarterly VAT, depending on your frequency, the first VAT quarter to be entered digitally will end in June, July or August."

Farmers needed to subscribe to



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MTD in order to submit their returns via their compliant software.

"They can either complete this through their HMRC login, or if they use a secretary or organisation to complete their accounts, then they can subscribe for you," added Ms James.

In the farm office, businesses needed to change to functional compatible software which linked automatically with the HMRC VAT system to update the return with no manual intervention.

### Records

Ms James said: "The software must be able to keep all required records in a digital form, create a VAT return from those records and provide HMRC with that information digitally.

"It must also be able to receive information from HMRC about the business' compliance records.

"You are not being asked to record anything different, but the way you record it is changing."

For those already on financial software packages, they needed to check their software would be suitable.

"Many older, existing computer systems will not be compliant and will need upgrading or replacing.

"So it is important to check your current method of calculating and recording VAT is MTD compliant."

David Kirby, managing director of financial software specialist Figured, said for those already on software packages which were compliant nothing would really change.

"They just need to ensure they are doing their submission process properly. If you are just on a spreadsheet or totally outsource it, those are the people who need to get on to software," he said.

For those outsourcing it, their accountants should be leading them but if they were not, they should be asking them questions.

Ms James said there were a number of different options for software, with prices varying considerably depending on what option was chosen.

"If you just want a package to do the VAT, many accountants are offering generic, proprietary packages, usually on a monthly licence.

"However, perhaps this change should be an opportunity to get a package which will allow more in-depth financial analysis and benchmarking. These packages may cost more, but will deliver far more in return."

Ms James added in many rural areas with slow and unreliable broadband, a solution may be to use a secretary or organisation to submit

### OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE TAX MANAGEMENT

MOVING to MTD could seem like a chore to farm businesses, but David Kirby emphasised it should be seen as an opportunity to manage the business more professionally.

He said the vision was that eventually, people should not have to complete a lengthy tax return, because by using the software to keep a track of their everyday business, they already had one there.

"There are a lot of benefits of getting onto computerised accounting packages," he said.

### Compliant

He added the threshold was probably going to come down and more businesses would be required to be compliant.

"The vision is a totally software-based tax system," he said.

He questioned why businesses would wait until they were forced to change, rather than getting ahead of the game.

"The time is nigh to get ahead. Particularly MTD is one thing, but business uncertainty is just as big a threat. It is a good chance to get your house in order."

He said the main benefit was it would start to enable automated reporting. Farmers would then be able to access cashflow and profit and loss reports.

"Essentially, maintaining accounts on an ongoing basis, you will get a lot more accurate and up-to-date information to make decisions."

He added it would also be easy to link other applications to the systems, allowing for things such as image capture of receipts.

"The integration is only going to get better over time."

He added having financial data, inputs and production figures meant it would then be easy to benchmark. The information could also be shared across members of the team through multiple logins, or given to an accountant or bank manager.

the returns on behalf of the business.

Mr Kirby also issued a warning to those tempted to use 'bridging software' linking a spreadsheet to be compliant, as these would not evolve with the development of the scheme as other software would.

"The next thing is then going to

come along. You may as well get on with it and switch," he said.

### SUITABLE SOFTWARE

To find a compliant software programme, visit [gov.uk/guidance/find-software-thats-compatible-with-making-tax-digital-for-vat](http://gov.uk/guidance/find-software-thats-compatible-with-making-tax-digital-for-vat)

Achieving national recognition does not mean your approach to milk production should be set forever, and trophy-winning **Geoff Spence** has no intention of resting on his laurels as he continues to develop and evolve his dairy farming system.

# Winning ways evolve to meet challenges ahead

**W**inning a national Dairy Farmer of the Year award in 2007 and the Gold Cup in 2009 are pleasant memories, but as Geoff Spence, who runs Lowfield Farm, near Northallerton, with his son Chris says memories do not make you money.

He says: "While winning the awards was a great honour, we have to move on to remain efficient and sustainable as the market evolves. My system of 10 years ago was right for then, but not necessarily right for now.

"We have to consistently review all we do, building on the foundations of good cows, a strong team and an efficient system."

And the farm has certainly moved on. From 360 cows in 2009, Geoff is now milking 708 cows on a three-times-a-day system. They are averaging 11,300



Colin Lucas (left) from Genus ABS and Geoff Spence.

litres at 4.2% fat and 3.3% protein with milk sold to Arla on a constituent contract.

The cows calve all-year-round and are housed in four milking groups, and are TMR fed.

Close attention is paid to

cow comfort and all buildings have good ventilation and plenty of trough space. He has recently installed LED lighting.

Cell counts are running at 167 and, by adopting selective

**“**We have to consistently review all we do, building on the foundations of good cows, a strong team and an efficient system

**Geoff Spence**

dry cow tubing, he has reduced antibiotic use. Only cows with a cell count of more than 200 are tubed, meaning 90% of cows receive no dry cow therapy.

## Fertility

Geoff rears all his own replacements and achieves excellent fertility while breeding cows with an emphasis on fat and protein. GMS evaluator Thomas Tiffin uses the Genus ABS GMS programme to rank the females in the herd.

The older generations in the herd have an average profitable lifetime index (EPLI) of £236, while the milking heifers are now £506. Bulls currently being used include ABS Crimson, ABS Outback and ABS Achiever. The first choice bulls have £815PLI



Surplus heifers provide an income stream when milk price falls.

and are +69kg F&P with +10% daughter fertility.

He now makes extensive use of Genus ABS Sexcel sexed semen. Introduced to the UK market in 2017, Genus ABS Sexcel is produced using unique, proprietary technology that is gentle on the cells and delivers excellent conception rates. It has been stringently validated through ABS Real World Data, which aggregates results from real customers with more than 40 million cow records worldwide.

Geoff says: "Sexed semen has allowed us to develop two additional income streams which help us when the milk price falls.

"By producing more females, we are able to sell surplus heifers bred from our better genetics. We can also increase the number of beef calves produced for sale and minimise the number of black-and-white bulls.

"With Sexcel we have been achieving 76% conception rates

on our heifers and this is helping us calf heifers down younger."

About 10-12 heifers a month are sold to a regular customer who operates a flying herd and about 60 others will be sold most years. All are sold direct and only high health status, high merit heifers are sold.

The use of Sexcel has meant more cows can be crossed to beef, and Geoff is producing British Blue crosses from the bottom 45% of cows.

All calves are sold to a local finisher, usually by three weeks old, and are averaging £200-£300 per head.

### Gestation

When choosing beef sires, he selects bulls based on calving ease and a shorter gestation length, arguing that just two days shorter gestation means he will sell 60 additional litres.

Colin Lucas, of Genus ABS,



The herd has increased to more than 700 cows.

says: "Putting more cows to beef is generating a second, significant extra income stream. Geoff is now selling 220 more beef calves a year than he was just three years ago. At £250/head that is an extra £55,000.

"His breeding strategy is producing the quality cows he needs while generating two additional cash inflows to the business."

To improve performance, Geoff has been using Genus ABS



The cows are averaging 11,300 litres and are housed in four milking groups.

Reproductive Management System (RMS) since 2015. When he started, the herd was averaging a 22% (21-day) pregnancy rate based on a regime requiring early intervention.

Since moving to RMS, cows and heifers are left longer before intervention, leading to a reduced drug use, yet the 21-day pregnancy rate has risen to 26%. The 4% increase in pregnancy

rate is calculated to be worth 0.72ppl due to more fresh cows in milk, increased calf sales and reduced cost per pregnancy, but Geoff stresses the importance for the whole system.

He says: "Getting cows in-calf more effectively is important for our heifer and beef sales.

"We have also managed the calving pattern, loading calvings into August to December to suit the contract and reduce spring milk which helps the milk price.

"From August to January we target 80 cows calving a month while for the rest of the year this reduces to 60 per month. We look for 25 heifers joining the herd every month."

With 700 cows, forage production is a major concern and, in 2016, he moved to a multi-cut system for grass silage, with the expectation that making five cuts would produce more consistent feed than the three larger cuts he used to take.

#### **Forage**

"We need to feed for milk quality and so require quality forage. It is no longer enough to produce the tonnage you need, you need quality too.

"For this reason we have also

increased the proportion of maize in the diet."

To manage the business, Geoff is a strong believer in data and transparency, sharing KPIs with the on-farm team as well as his external advisers.

He says: "We have an increasing amount of data available from RMS, Interherd and Uniform Agri, and Chris makes sure we all have access to the latest KPIs so we can review where we are and consider changes.

"As a business, we need to constantly challenge what we do and how we do it to improve efficiency and to manage reputation. Selling livestock direct I can get feedback from my customers of both heifers and beef calves and make sure I am supplying what they require. I need to be recognised as someone who provides high quality, healthy livestock from an efficient and well-run herd.

"As a milk producer I must demonstrate that the herd operates to high standards of welfare, producing a product to meet customer requirements.

"Increasingly, reputation management will become more important and the adoption of new technologies and techniques will play a crucial role."

Leg attributes and correctness play a big role in breeding cattle which need good mobility with minimal lameness. In the first of our series, Uncovering £PLI, Ann Hardy looks at the top 10 bulls in the leg health category.

# Top bulls for reducing lameness in your herd

**W**hen the formula for profitable lifetime index (£PLI) was adjusted last year it was also simplified in presentation. Traits were grouped into blocks and simplified using seven sub-indices. In this, the first of our series, we look at the top 10 bulls in the leg health category.

No-one would dispute that healthy feet and legs are among the most important traits in a dairy cow, conferring on the animal the all-important ability to walk, whether that is into the parlour, robot or out to far flung grass fields.

Legs and feet have long been a selection priority on most successful farms and today, by selecting for PLI, producers are also boosting improvements to leg health.

This new category in AHDB Dairy's flagship index is made up from several traits.

First there is Lameness Advantage, the calculation of which includes actual lameness incidents direct from milk recording organisations NMR and CIS, along with digital dermatitis and locomotion data. And then there is the feet and leg (F&L) composite index, calculated from Holstein UK's type classification programme.

## Index

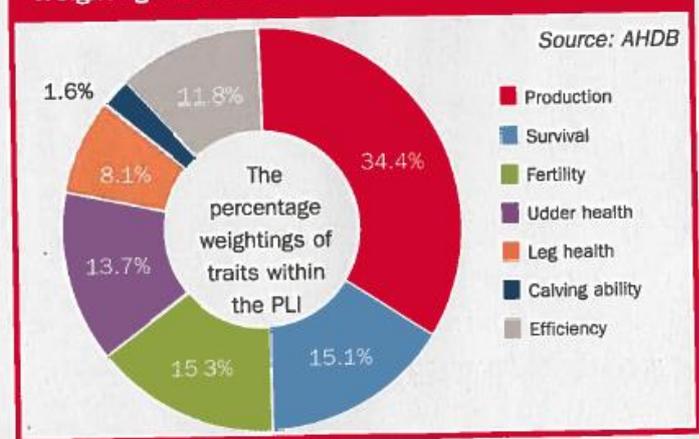
The result is a category in PLI termed leg health, which accounts for 8.1% of the reformulated index.

Here, we rerank the top 200 PLI bulls – both genomic and proven – to uncover the top 10 available bulls for this sub-index.

**1** ABS Theory earns the number one position for leg health, combining a superb lameness advantage (LA) of 5.5 with a F&L composite of 1.45.

A son of Stol Joc, he was largely used by breeders in Genus's Cornerstone progeny testing programme.

## Weighting of traits in PLI calculation



With a PLI of £478, Theory only just qualifies for the top 200 on PLI. His otherwise good breeding profile, based on 1,704 UK daughters, is somewhat let down by a predicted transmitting ability (PTA) of just 3.7kg fat.

**2** Number two bull, Larcrest Commander (a Mogul son and not to be confused with Larcrest Commend, although from the same Cosmopolitan

cow family) weighs in with a LA of 3.6, a high F&L composite of 2.28, and a type merit of 2.42.

With a good production proof and a PLI of £591 (ranks 52), but on the downside his high stature (2.12) increases the costs of maintenance in his daughters.

**3** Third ranking Mr Chartroi Eloquent has a PLI of £545 which ranks him just outside the

top 100 £PLI sires. As well as earning a high score for leg health under UK farming conditions, this Lavaman son is also one of the leading sires for Canada's hoof health index.

However, he's also the only top 10 leg health sire which will not improve his daughters' fertility.

**4** Fourth ranking EDG Rubicon needs little introduction as one of the highest PLI proven sires at £676.

A phenomenal fat transmitter with good health and fitness, this Mogul son is also number two in the top 10 for type merit at 3.36.

A key feature of his daughters is their ability to walk, aided by an intermediate set to the leg. He is only available sexed.

**5** Even higher for TM at 3.39 is fifth-ranking Delaberge Pepper, who also musters a PLI

of £616 – number 31 on the proven sire ranking. His exceptional F&L composite (2.75) and locomotion (3.46) even exceed those of his renowned sire, Mogul, who dominates the pedigrees in this ranking.

**6** UK breeding features in sixth position in the shape of the Numero Uno son, Relough Danumero.

From Malcolm McLean's Northern Ireland-based herd, this bull hails from the renowned Danna family.

Although towards the lower end of the PLI ranking, he offers a type merit of 2.62 and outstanding locomotion, as well as cell count improvement.

**7** Co-op Robust Cabriolet is another bull earning a household name, ranking seventh on PLI and taking the same position for leg health.



Mr Chartroise Eloquent is the third best Holstein ranked according to leg health.

Although his daughters' legs tend to be slightly sickled with a lower foot angle, he earns one of the best lameness advantage figures in the top 10, with low lameness incidents in his daughters and good locomotion.

Daughters are considerably smaller than average and cheap to keep.

**8** A different type of bull ranks eighth in the shape of EDG Deman. His PLI of £503 ranks him 151st and his daughters are tall with excellent F&L composite. Their high pins do not detract from their outstanding locomotion, at 3.06.

**9** Ninth position is taken by the highest ranking genomic young sire, Peak AltaAnchor, whose moderate

sized daughters show good locomotion and lameness advantage.

With a PLI of £730 he is far ahead of the daughter-proven sires on the list for this index, yet only ranks 111th among young sires.

A son of Brown-Star Tuff Chinchi, both his sire and dam have Mogul as their grandsire. As a sire whose evaluations are based on genomic predictions, his reliability is lower than the proven sires.

**10** Rounding off the top 10 is a somewhat earlier generation bull in the shape of Planet son Elvys Isy.

With a PLI £521, ranking him in 132nd position, he offers moderate-sized frames and good cell count improvement.

### Expert opinion: Philip Dobson, Genus

»Philip Dobson, Genus ABS progeny evaluator, says: "Over the last 30 years, the dairy industry has assumed straight legs and steep heels produce cows with the best and longest lasting legs and feet.

"With the introduction of locomotion scoring, lameness advantage and lifespan index, this has

proved not to be the case. The modern cow is now required to either live in cubicles on concrete, or walk long distances to pasture.

#### Fertility

"The need for quality legs and feet is greater than ever to produce animals that improve production, fertility and public perception."

### Top 10 Holstein sires ranked on leg health (taken from top 200 £PLI sires)

PLI rank	PLI	PLI rel	Bull name	Milk (kg)	Fat (kg)	Prot (kg)	Fat (%)	Prot (%)	LA	SCC	FI	Udder	Legs & Feet
192	478	95	ABS THEORY	178	3.7	12.9	-0.04	0.09	5.5	-12	7.6	0.76	1.45
52	591	95	LARCREST COMMANDER	813	37.1	26.1	0.06	0	3.6	-11	0.1	2.21	2.28
107	545	90	MR CHARTROI ELOQUENT	726	37	30.7	0.1	0.08	3.8	-7	-3	0.52	1.94
9	676	88	EDG RUBICON	662	46.5	23.5	0.24	0.02	2.1	-15	4.7	1.81	2.71
31	616	92	DELABERGE PEPPER	362	34.5	20.1	0.25	0.1	2	-15	7	2.56	2.75
167	491	89	RELOUGH DANUMERO	134	26.5	7.7	0.27	0.04	3	-29	8.7	1.83	2.05
7	691	94	CO-OP ROBUST CABRIOLET	619	38.3	23	0.16	0.03	4.2	-11	3.7	1.06	1.35
151	503	91	EDG DEMAN	302	32.6	18.4	0.25	0.11	2.1	-8	3.7	2.42	2.36
111*	730	63	PEAK ALTAANCHOR	530	33	24.3	0.14	0.09	3.4	-12	11	1.78	1.68
132	521	92	ELVYS ISY	560	16.5	15.6	-0.07	-0.03	3.9	-28	6.5	0.22	1.43

Source: AHDB Dairy

\*Young sire ranking (all other bulls are proven sires); £PLI = Profitable Lifetime Index; LA = Lameness Advantage; SCC = Somatic Cell Count In ALT = Alta Genetics; BUL = bullsemen.com; CBL = Cogent Breeding Ltd; GEN = Genus ABS; SMX = Semex; UKS = UK Sire Services; WWS = \