

Mastitis links answer questions

Interesting links between individual and herd somatic cell counts (SCC) and cow longevity are being investigated within the NMR database by James Hanks from Reading University's Veterinary Epidemiology Unit in collaboration with leading dairy vets. Their findings so far will be presented in posters at this year's British Mastitis Conference on October 14.

Working with Gloucester-based vet Chris Watson, NMR data is used to investigate overall herd cell count and the link with levels of new and chronic infections. Mr Watson has already identified some interesting trends among dairy herds in his own practice and the NMR data will allow these to be investigated on a far larger scale.

In a similar way, NMR data is used in a study with Andy Biggs from Vale Veterinary Group in Devon. This explores links between SCCs before and after the dry period with the probability that a cow is culled in the following lactation. This shows the significant impact of high SCCs on chances of survival, even at relatively modest levels (below 500,000 cells/ml). "All this work makes extensive use of



Links found in NMR data may help mastitis control

data we already have in the NMR database. It is an historical record of half the dairy herds in the country so can answer many questions on the influence of SCC and other parameters on productivity, fertility and longevity," says Dr Hanks.

Long-life cow wins Welsh award

Carmarthenshire producer Simon Davies from Brynhyfryd, Hebron, has won this year's NMR/Welsh Agricultural Society Lifetime Daily Yield award. The

NMR's Jane McGill presents Simon Davies with the Lifetime Daily Yield award (NMR/RWAS)



award was presented to the NMR recorded cow with the highest financial lifetime daily yield in Wales. The cow, Castellhyfryd Storm Rebecca, has a high lifetime yield and a financial value – her 'earnings' from birth – of £6.92 a day.

Longevity is the drive behind the management of the Castellhyfryd herd. "I aim to calve heifers at around two years old and then get cows back in calf within 100 days after calving," says Simon. "I try and keep the calving interval under 400 days even with a few cows on ET programmes." And Simon looks for cows with staying power. "We have plenty of cows in their sixth lactation and some in their eighth, ninth and tenth. These cows have high lifetime yields with good milk quality and have paid for themselves a few times over."

Q ear tags

NMR's Nordic Star ear tag company will be promoting its new tag range this autumn. The Q Flex range boasts a top quality design and high definition print to ease management.

Q Flex tags will be available directly from Nordic Star at a permanent price offer of £1 for a new pair and £2 for all replacements for NMR recording customers. See Nordic Star on the NMR stand at the Dairy Event and Livestock Show, Stoneleigh, or contact Nordic Star directly on 0800 731 9465.

Health team

NML and MyHealthyHerd have teamed up in the Farm Health Planning demonstration at this year's Dairy Event and Livestock Show.

Ben Bartlett from NML and herd health specialists, Dick Sibley and Peter Orpin from MyHealthyHerd will be demonstrating effective control routes and supporting their discussions with real life examples.

"Johne's disease is one of the most costly diseases facing British dairy farmers," says Ben Bartlett. "NML and MyHealthyHerd have been working together for the past year on control measures using milk testing and risk management. This approach is rapidly gaining momentum due to its success in delivering cost effective solutions and is playing a valuable part in improving herd health."

Open invite

All NMR customers are invited to the presentation of the NMR/RABDF Gold Cup 2009, which will take place on the NMR stand at the Dairy Event and Livestock Show, Stoneleigh, on September 16 at 4.30pm. The presentation will be followed by cheese and wine refreshments.