



Exploiting calf potential

Dairy farmers can significantly increase lifetime performance and profits worth £148 per cow per year by feeding calves to exploit their genetic potential in the first few weeks of life according to Frank Wright Trouw Nutrition International who are launching the Metabolic Programming approach at the event.

"Research shows that a brief period of enhanced nutrition in the perinatal period switches on genes that lead to better lifetime performance," explains ruminant technical adviser Amanda Sutton. "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. If the genes are not activated in the first few weeks they are not activated later in life."

"Metabolic Programming is a feeding system geared to exploiting this potential."

"The system involves feeding higher levels of a more concentrated milk replacer for the first six weeks followed by a gradual weaning period over four weeks to

prevent a growth check. Typically growth rates exceed 750g/day and there is no effect on dry feed intakes.

"Calves fed on the programme grow better, exhibit optimal rumen development, reduced incidence of scours and have better mammary development. In trials which follow calves through to adulthood, calves fed on the metabolic programming approach were served younger and entered the herd sooner."

"On average they produced 8% more milk in the first two lactations (worth £29 per head) and there was a 47% reduction in the culling rate in the first two lactations (£67). Combined with lower calf mortality (£22) and the shorter growing period (£30) the financial benefit adds up to an extra profit of £148 per cow."

Frank Wright Trouw Nutrition will also be launching a new milk powder—Life Start—at the event. (Tel: 01335 341102; Stand FF 366).

Launch of digital dermatitis scoring service

Provita will be launching a new digital dermatitis scoring service at this year's event. The initiative will be facilitated, on farm, by professionally trained digital dermatitis in-parlour scorers. To mark the launch of this service, the first 100 farmers coming on to the company's stand at the Dairy Event will be able to sign up for a free farm visit, worth £50, from one of the assessors.

"The new service will allow milk producers throughout the UK to get on top of a very common and debilitating problem that is costing the dairy industry £millions in lost output annually," explained Tommy Armstrong, technical adviser for lameness at Provita.

"Recent research confirms that many dairy farmers underestimate the level of digital dermatitis within their herds. Our own on-farm surveys have indicated that while herd owners are of the view that between 25% and 30% of their cows have the problem, in reality up to 75% of a milking herd can be affected."

"Prevention is best through effective bio-security, hygiene and footbathing as once the disease is present on a farm it will not be possible to eradicate it. Furthermore, it is now recognised that digital dermatitis is present on the majority of UK Dairy farms—therefore a herd management protocol must be put in place to control it." (Tel: 0800 3284982; Stand AH 187).



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References: 1. Eulenbergh et al. Beeinflussung der Geburt bei Schwein und Rind mit Oxytocin, Carbetocin und Carbazol. Wien. Tierarztl. Mschr. 80 (1993) 276-279. 2. Starke et al. Ein Behandlungsverfahren zur Stimulation der Uterus-involution im Frühpostpartum des Rindes mittels Cloprostenol und carbetocin. Tierarztl. Umschau 53, 730-739 (1998).

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