

About Dairy UK:

Dairy UK is a lobbying organisation that represents the interests of the whole dairy industry, from milkmen and farmers to processors and co-ops. This newsletter picks out issues of interest for milk producers, but Dairy UK is active for farmers in many other areas.

Set up in 2004, Dairy UK has established itself as an influential organisation. By effectively representing the interests of farmers, processors and milkmen, we can speak with a single voice on behalf of the whole dairy sector. Dairy UK compliments but does not duplicate the activities of the established farmer organisations.

Our activities are governed by a Board made up of representatives from all sectors of the industry, including two dairy farmers nominated by the Farmers' Forum. Dairy UK's chairman is Mark Allen.

If you would like to find out more, just give us a call!

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New Dairy UK Chairman will fight for farmers



Mark Allen has been appointed Chairman of Dairy UK and immediately vowed to extend the association's farmer-focused activities.

Previously vice-chairman of the Board, he succeeded the Rt Hon David Curry MP, chairman of Dairy UK for the last three years. Allen said:

"It is a great privilege to become chairman of the organisation that is the voice of the dairy industry and I look forward to serving the interests of the whole industry. I will ensure that DairyUK addresses the key challenges that are facing our sector. We must tackle the issue of sustainability on economic, environmental and social grounds.

"That also means food security, and we'll be making it clear in a forthcoming paper how government can support our dairy farmers and processors alike. Profitable farmers are the key to a strong, vibrant industry."

DairyUK is drawing up a position on food security to present to Defra as part of its consultation on the issue.

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UK untouched by Chinese milk scandal

Details are emerging of how Chinese milk was adulterated on a large-scale with melamine to conceal watering down.

The chemical is easily available in China through the manufacture of plastics and China's relatively young dairy industry lacks the UK's sophisticated milk testing regime. In addition, milk in China is delivered by producers to milk collection centres, which then sell on the milk to processors. Adulteration was taking place at these collection centres.

Our industry's frequent farm inspections, regular milk testing, and excellent traceability mean that it would be unthinkable for a milk producer to contemplate a similar fraud here.

Nonetheless, Dairy UK has been working hard over recent weeks to help protect the image of UK milk and dairy products. Staff helped to brief the Food Standards Agency before its Chief Scientists appeared in Radio Four's Today programme.

We have also been keeping our members up to date on the unfolding drama in China, as well as briefing them on the situation in the UK.

Contact: Ed Komorowski on 020 7486 7244 or ekomorowski@dairyUK.org or see www.dairyuk.org/enviro

Get free advice on meeting the new rules on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones

DairyUK has put together a useful list of where to find key information and advice on the new Nitrate Vulnerable Zone action programme. This new legislation, which could cost the average dairy farm some £50,000 to comply with, according to DairyUK, comes into force on 1 January 2009 for farmers in an existing NVZ area and one year later for others. There is a three year transition period for increasing slurry storage capacity.

The full list can be found online at www.dairyuk.org/nvz

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Farmers back Proud of Dairy campaign at industry event



Hundreds of dairy farmers signed up to the Proud of Dairy campaign on the DairyUK stand at this year's Dairy Event (17 to 18 September). Encouraged by the live "Proud of Dairy" hall of fame video presentation on our stand, producers filled in registration forms and tussled to get their hands on Proud of Dairy badges.

Over the two days, we gave out nearly a thousand badges and were delighted with the volume of positive support given to the campaign. Reasons to be proud ranged from farmer Will Rolton's: "Milking – bish bash bosh", to Anne Letheven's "Because we have got the best dairy farmers in the world".

Dairy UK is now planning to raise the profile of its Proud of Dairy campaign by writing to MPs in Westminster and Brussels.

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Media interest in the progeny of clones is far from over, warns Dairy UK

National media has not forgotten about the progeny of clones in the UK dairy herd, and more reports are likely when any of the three female progeny finally start producing milk. This may be later this year or early next year.

DairyUK believes that the UK dairy industry should not be excluded from exploiting new and emerging breeding technologies that could offer significant benefits in terms of productivity and animal welfare. However, cloning is still far in advance of what many consumers consider acceptable in food production. In fact, it could damage consumers' perception of milk as a natural wholesome product, which is one of the industry's greatest assets.

DairyUK is preparing a press response statement to deal with any enquiries. It will point out to consumers that there are only a small number of progeny of clones. It will also relay the findings of food safety experts who have said that the milk they produce is entirely safe and indistinguishable from the milk from any other dairy animal.

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Providing security when buying in dairy stock

Animal health was one of the more lively issues debated at DairyUK's annual conference last month.

More than 90% of delegates agreed that herd health in the UK could be improved by encouraging purchasers to demand more information from the vendor. Sellers could therefore add value to their animals by providing this information.

This might be done by a certification system, covering the health of the animal, the health of the herd it comes from, and its location. Details would be drawn up by industry vets, producers, and auctioneers to ensure that it was simple yet met the needs of industry. Dairy UK agreed to facilitate this initiative, and will be discussing it with others in the livestock industry.

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Dairy UK assembles support for export refunds

As world dairy prices weaken again, Dairy UK is examining whether it could assemble a coalition of dairy exporters to lobby Brussels for export refunds.

Trends in the world market take a long time to affect farm gate prices in Great Britain. But in Northern Ireland, farmers and processors are more directly exposed to the export market.

There are hurdles to the re-introduction of export refunds. First, the European Commission wants to see their elimination and will only countenance their re-introduction if low prices threaten the build up of intervention stocks. Second, many dairy exporting countries and industries are in favour of liberalising the CAP through quota increases; seeking export refunds would contradict this position.

DairyUK also supports liberalisation in the long term, but believes that this doesn't stop the Commission from using its powers to minimise price volatility. If the weakness on the world market proves to be significant, then sentiment may change and export refunds become more attractive.

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Dairy UK to oppose moves to make milk "less natural"



French dairy companies are expected to lobby Brussels this autumn to allow the protein standardisation of liquid milk.

The practice would entail removing the protein from milk through filtration and adding back a uniform amount. Milk processors would have to invest heavily in new equipment, because standardisation is only permitted at present in dairy products.

DairyUK has decided to oppose any moves to get the practice legalised in the EU because of fears over cost and damage to the image of milk. Consumers recognise milk as a natural and unadulterated product.

Though a market for the protein released by standardisation could be found amongst cheese manufacturers, it is likely that volumes available will far exceed demand. It would take time to develop alternative markets within and outside the UK.

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WTO agriculture talks stall (again)

WTO members were close to a deal on the long-running agriculture talks in late July, but negotiations were finally brought down by the US.

America decided it wasn't being offered enough by large developing countries like India in exchange for further cuts to its domestic agricultural support programmes.

The negotiations are not over, and it is conceivable that the growing global financial crisis may create the political will for the talks to be re-started in earnest.

However, most observers believe that further progress cannot be made until the new US administration has bedded in after the November Presidential elections.

This may mean that substantive talks will not resume until late spring next year. Even then, it remains to be seen what attitude the new administration may have to trade liberalisation. If the US slides into recession then there may be no support for the idea.

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Working for cheesemakers... and for dairy farmers



The All Party Parliamentary Group for Cheese is hosting an autumn reception in conjunction with Dairy UK at Westminster next month. The aim is to promote the quality of British cheese and foster understanding amongst politicians and other decision makers.

A little under a third of UK milk production is used in the manufacture of more than 700 named cheeses in Britain. This volume has increased by over 20% in the last five years. So cheese, and the returns that it is able to achieve from the marketplace, is of great importance to dairy farmers.

DairyUK has successfully completed the integration of the British Cheese Board, which will also ensure that the industry communicates a consistent message. We are also working closely with the Food Standards Agency on its saturated fat and salt campaigns, and we are looking at opportunities to promote British cheese to consumers.

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Dairy UK members drive forward world-class dairy skills

Dairy UK and its members have recently pledged their support to an innovative new dairy education initiative which will drive up skills in the industry's manufacturing sector.

Project Eden, the European Dairy Education Project, will develop new skills and qualifications suitable for Europe-wide accreditation within the dairy industry. A high-powered steering group of industry representatives will implement this exciting project, with backers including senior managers from Arla Foods UK, Robert Wiseman Dairies, Dairy Crest, Dairy UK and the Society of Dairy Technology.

They will take responsibility for delivering the project, working alongside a dedicated project manager from the Food Sector National Skills Academy. Sector skills council Improve, as well as training providers from the public and private sectors, will also be involved.

Project Eden is anticipated to take 12 months to implement. The training provider is expected to be in place and a new curriculum accredited by September 2009.

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