

15. maj 2013

UK-IDF Open day 2013 at Cattle Information Service, Telford, UK

Visiting new state of the art laboratory and updating UK dairy professionals on activities

April 18 2013 almost 60 dairy professionals from all over the UK met in Telford. They got a very inspiring day with demonstration of the on-line linear score program used by the breeders, a tour of the new lab where automation and swift communication of results is key goal, - as well as presentations to update on IDF activities and other relevant topics within milk production.

The event was arranged by UK-IDF in cooperation with Cattle Information Service in Telford, and sponsored by FOSS UK.



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The morning program

The mornings program was dedicated to IDF, - presenting part of the work which is done in IDF, - seen from a UK perspective.

The UK-IDF chair Judith Bryans opened the meeting welcoming and presenting examples of the importance that IDF speak up for the dairy industry. As one example she mentioned the “protein case” where IDF finally, after years of struggling, succeeded in a having dairy proteins recognized as superior to plant proteins within Codex Alimentarius. This, she stated, would not have been possible without IDF! See the full presentation here:

<https://www.box.com/s/1zhorquo7j47irs4yqav>

Jim Begg, Director General of dairy UK, who is the body representing the UK dairy industry gave us an extensive status of milk production and the situation for the milk producers worldwide. Of major importance he mentioned the stagnating milk production in many established milk producing countries while the demand for milk products is steadily increasing particularly in the Asian market. At present, - and for some time to come, the milk prices will be increasing, - the question is whether they will increase sufficiently to make it good business for the milk producers to produce milk. At present climatic challenges in many regions have caused heavily increased prices on feed and forage.

Dr Delanie Kellon, technical officer at IDF in Bruxelles, gave us an extensive insight in the activities within environmental work carried out in IDF, and how it relates back to the UK. IDF is investing quite some resources in developing guidelines etc for the dairy industry on animal health and welfare, farm management, animal feeding and within nutrition and health. In addition she gave an overview of IDFs partnering with international standard and policy setting bodies, such as FAO, and she also listed some of the alliances IDF forms with Dairy stake holders.

Here she mentioned GDAA (global dairy agenda for action) which consists of IDF, SAI (sustainable agricultural initiative platform) GDP (global dairy platform), FEPALE (pan American dairy association), EDA (European dairy association) and ESADA (eastern and southern African dairy association). Finally she encouraged the UK members to join the work and send input to IDF. The better contact between the members and the organization, the better results!



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Tour of the lab

Before lunch we all got guided tours to see the CIS lab and in a tent set up for this occasion we got a very professional introduction to the WEB- mate program CIS has launched recently.

In the lab, where close to 50% of all milk recording samples in the UK is analyzed, focus has been on automation. In order to save costs for labor and in order to process samples as quickly and with as high traceability as possible. The result is that that farmers usually will be able to look into their results the day after the samples are picked up on the farm, - and that the three Combis in the lab are all operated by 1 person. The lab is analyzing samples for fat, protein, urea, somatic cells and some samples are analyzed for fatty acid profiles too.

The automation of the lab has mainly been achieved by installing sample handling tables for heating (with hot air) and transportation from the German company Raudszus.



A view of the lab, one Combi in the foreground with the table from Raudszus



At the other side of the corridor analyses are carried out for Johne's disease, IBR, BVD, Lepto and Neospora on those specific milk recording samples where such analyses are ordered by the farmer.

One of the reasons for returning results so quickly to the farms is the fact that whether the farmer is sampling himself or not, all info on the cows are entered before the technician leave the farm. This means that data are validated at the data center before the milk samples reach the lab, - and possible problems sorted out. So once analytical results are there they are automatically uploaded if the farm was cleared!



Receiving and registering samples for health analyses, - and pipetting samples for Johnes testing.

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Demo of WEB mate



In a tent which had been set up for the day Lucy Andrews from CIS presented the solutions used by farmers serviced by CIS in order to plan the breeding and insemination of their cows. Demonstration of type scoring and linear assessment of cows was demonstrated on cows brought to the tent for the day.

It was demonstrated how the scoring of the cows are uploaded instantaneously and how insemination plans then can be made for the herd by the farmer himself on the internet almost before the referees have left the farm. The system, - being very user friendly- has been very well received and big part of the reason is that everything works so swiftly. In addition all farmers can now download an app, MobileHerd, on their mobile phone which via which they are able to see and enter all information about their herd while in the barn. A farmer can get a status on single cow level as well as he can get a list of which cows to dry off this week. He can also enter all kinds of relevant information such as pregnancy determination, observed heat, culling etc. Info can then be synchronized next time internet is available.

Afternoon program

After lunch Julia Hawley, board member from Dairy Co and former chair of UK-IDF gave a presentation of her impressions from her farm visits while participating in IDF meetings worldwide. She very clearly showed that while conditions, - climatically as well as economically- are very different for instance between Germany, New Zealand, Italy or South Africa then the challenges and relevant themes are to a



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large extent the same. Examples were nursing of the calves and housing conditions for the cows.



I gave a presentation on the potential benefits of milk recording, - considering existing as well as upcoming parameters. UK is one of the milk producing countries in the EU with the lowest production costs for milk, - and while it seems that demand for milk as well as milk prices will be stable/increasing for a number of years to come there may be good reasons to increase milk production in the UK! Doing this efficiently demands that you are can control your production units, - your herd! See the full presentation here: <https://www.box.com/s/pkm1kuv2rubnj8p53akj>

At the end of the day Andrew Carr from FOSS UK presented some of the new opportunities coming from FOSS: In-line control of components in milk and milk products in order to optimize the composition of products, and the adulteration module for FTIR equipment which allow screening for components added to milk, - unintentionally as well as intentionally.



With quite some questions throughout the day from an active audience I think we all had an interesting and beneficial day.

Learning more about what happens in other corners of the milk industry as well as getting inspiration to take home and build on.

Thanks to all of you for an inspiring day!