

# New regulations bring changes to show

**THE new regulations concerning the promotion of antibiotics to farmers by pharmaceutical companies came into force the day before the South West Dairy Show at Shepton Mallet last month.**

For company staff on stands this meant a change of approach. The hyenas were much in evidence on Boehringer Ingelheim's stand, with promotion of the NSAID Metacam indicating a threat to cattle.

An impressive picture of the Somerset countryside was seen over the head of a cow with the threat of mastitis circling, represented by the hyenas. Hipra was also targeting mastitis and promoting the performance of vaccination with Startvac.

Zoetis emphasised prevention, not treatment, proclaiming the value of SureCalf. Having been launched in Scotland, the opportunity to increase the value of stock by certification is being promoted in the rest of the country. This is all about support for the vaccination of calves against

respiratory disease with Rispolval.

There are two SureCalf certificates with ear tags, one for calves pre-sale in the autumn and one for calves that have been housed. The aim is to provide confidence for the buyer. A helpline is available (0800 6681886) to support the free online registration and certification.

## Awards

There were significant awards to vets and from vets. Collaboration between John Fishwick at the RVC and Peter Clark (veterinary member of the Bath & West dairy committee) has

**VETERINARY PRACTICE**  
reports on the substantial veterinary involvement  
at the South West Dairy Show last month

established the Dairy Farm Vet of the Future award.

Three RVC graduates' projects from their final year were assessed and praised by the judges for their contribution to the future of dairying. Peter Clark commented that the judges were looking for "practicality, originality and that little



bit of spark".

Peter Siviter examined the different immune responses of Brown Swiss and Holsteins to mastitis; Rebecca Inman examined many feet from dead cows in order to consider the effect of sole ulcers and white line disease on bone growth; Chloe Garnett looked into the reliability of heart girth measurements for predicting body weight in pre-weaned dairy calves.

All three were guests at the Dairy Industry Dinner on the eve of the show and all three are now working in cattle practices. After Becky received the top award and Chloe and Peter runner-up glassware, the panel

*The Vet of the Future presentation (from left): Peter Siviter, Chloe Garnett, Peter Clark, Neil Richardson (sponsor), Alan Cotton (chairman) and Becky Inman.*

welcomed each of them "to the food production industry". It is intended that this award will be competed for on an annual basis.

The Shepton Veterinary Group (local to the Show) took the opportunity to present awards to clients. Within the South West Healthy Livestock Initiative, more than 30 dairy clients have been involved in carrying out mobility scoring and tackling lameness problems.



Ray Creed was presented with the Low Lameness Salver. His herd achieved a high mobility score with only 1 in 20 cows recorded with a lameness incident, described by Paddy Gordon as "an impressive achievement reflecting hard work, high skills, real attention to detail, prompt treatment and looking after cow comfort".

Two high fertility awards were awarded, one for large and one for smaller herds. The performance of over 70 herds was assessed using the InterHerd+ analysis programme. Ryan Sandercock, farming 1,000 cows, was the large herd fertility winner, and Stephen Bendall, farming 140 cows, received the salver for herds under 200 cows.

Each of these herds is among the highest yielding herds in the practice and the point was emphasised that high milk yields are not a barrier to good fertility.

Within the InterHerd+ analysis comparison is made to the top quartile of 500 assessed herds. Fertility evaluation requires expert review as on-farm policies for delayed service, heat detection and the non service of cows to be culled can indicate an unrealistic situation.

Synergy Farm Health displayed a major advance in the use of technology on-farm. There is bound to be much discussion about the developments by Medria (France) of monitoring devices and Deutsche Telekom for receiving telecom signals and sending alerts to improve cattle management.

There are three current



applications. The imminence of calving is detected via a thermometer in the cow's vagina and the farmer receives a text message. A bolus in the rumen monitors the cow's temperature and the farmer is alerted to potential health problems.

Changes in cow behaviour are detected by a sensor on a collar around the neck of a cow that measures her activity every five minutes. When the cow comes into oestrus the farmer receives a text message. The promotion is that the farmer is able to sleep more easily, exactly the same approach with the telephone call from a robotic parlour. No call means a better sleep.

A radio station receives radio signals from the devices and these are converted to SMS messages or data output sent via the internet to the farm computer. The range is 200 metres and the data are stored for later analysis.

Synergy is a member of the XL Vets group and initial trials in

Somerset have been successful. Some four thousand farms throughout Europe are utilising the monitoring solutions. Further information is available via [www.xlvets.co.uk](http://www.xlvets.co.uk).

### Practices on show

Veterinary practices are very much in evidence at the show and have been for several years. The Delaware Veterinary Group promoted local produce from the farms of clients and as the farmers tasted the cheeses, buffalo sausages and cream tea there was much discussion about various topics, some of them of a veterinary nature.

Evolution Farm Vets were exhibiting for the first time, having started the practice in 2007 in Nether Stowey. Currently with three partners, two assistants and a TB tester, the practice has a base of dairy and beef clients, with a number of clients within the Somerset badger shooting area.

Garston Veterinary Group is a regular and exhibited examples of deformities from its museum. These proved good talking points and the double-headed, two-tailed and other deformed calves mixed well with one to one technical discussions.

Langford Veterinary Services at Bristol University had a site on the balcony overlooking the show ring, which provided a vantage point for assessing the cattle and reviewing the abattoir services and veterinary developments displayed.

A long-standing exhibitor with a developing veterinary involvement is Mole Valley Farmers. Veterinary

Services are taken up by members of the farming group with some suggestion of lower fees. The current involvement is three vets at Frome, three at South Molton and two-and-a-half at Newton Abbott. The practices cover the range of large and small animal with many of the members being smallholders with a few sheep, pigs, goats, etc.

Another regular exhibitor is the Westpoint Veterinary Group with a base in Cornwall and offering services to a changing milking environment in the south-west. The price of milk received by farmers and the restrictive role of the supermarkets were all hotly debated on the main concourse. The rather heavy rain reduced the number of people gathering but the industry stalwarts made sure that their views were broadcast.

### Assessment scheme

Changes to the Red Tractor Dairy Assessment started from 1st October. Veterinary involvement in developing and reviewing herd health plans now forms part of the scheme. A vet has to review the records, including disease incidence data and inspect the stock. A template for the assessment is available at [www.redtractorassurance.org.uk/dairy/templates](http://www.redtractorassurance.org.uk/dairy/templates).

Involuntary culls and calf mortality are to be recorded and a selection of cows reviewed for mobility as an indication of lameness. This is a significant development that is expected to improve the welfare of dairy herds.