

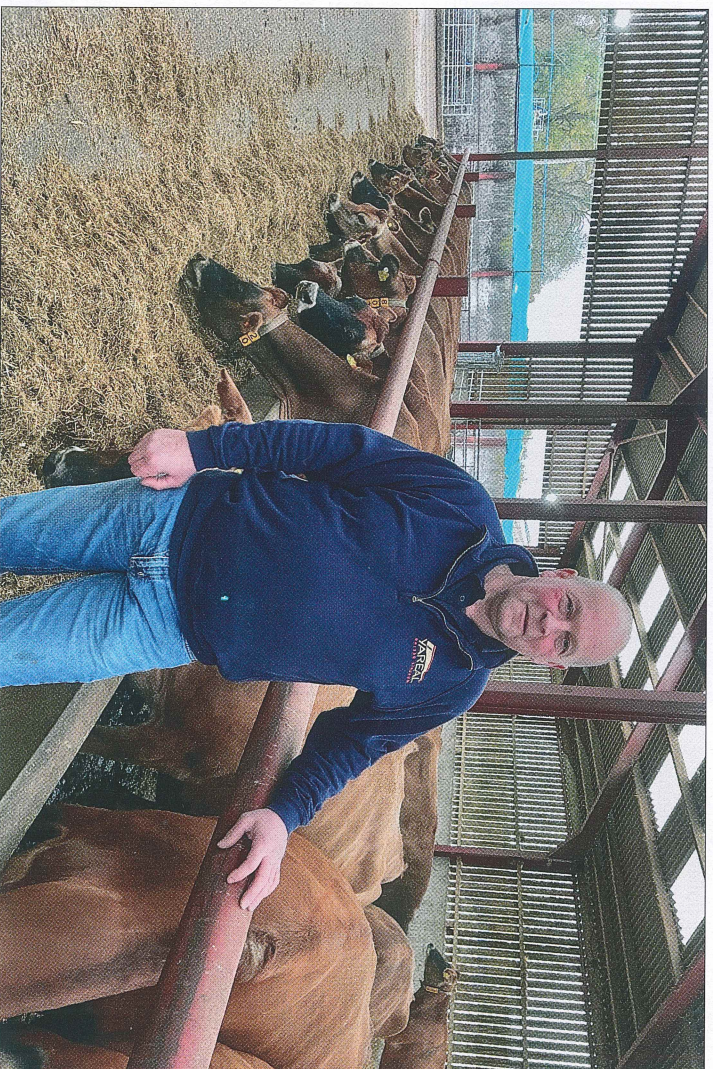
Cow monitors aid management

Introducing some of the latest technology is helping one dairy farming business to improve efficiency and redress the growing challenge of recruiting skilled staff. Monitoring the herd more closely is simplifying management and providing accurate real-time fertility and health information together with the nutritional status and location of the cows.

Developing an efficient system to maximise profit is the simple goal adopted by Yareal over the dairy units it manages in the midlands. Yareal owns and manages land and farms across Shropshire and Lincolnshire and runs a mixed farming enterprise including dairy, poultry, arable and woodland.

"We're farming over 1,500 cows in total—both our own and contract. All but one of the units carry Jersey herds, and in future we plan to scale up with the breed," explains Yareal's dairy operations manager John Cookson.

"Jerseys have a better feed conversion rate. We can stock more per area and their high solid milk best fits our Arla contract. Jerseys also have good fertility and feet and play a key role in creating a successful dairy business."



John Cookson says ear sensor technology is worth 1.5 good stock people on each of Yareal's dairy units.

Investing in technology

However, central to Yareal's farming business is the team, he says. "We employ 24 staff in total—from herd managers to calf rearers—and finding skilled stock people is becoming increasingly hard. But we can overcome the issue to a considerable degree by investing in some of the latest technology.

"For example, we have introduced CowManager ear sensor technology to every cow in each

of our herds. I believe this change equates to 1.5 good stock people on each unit.

"The system monitors every cow 24/7 and it is consistently doing the same job to the same standard every day—it never has a day off and it's doesn't come in late with a hangover.

"In fact, it's more than an extra pair of eyes. The system has become an indispensable management tool," he comments.

"I initially tried and tested the system on 100 cows after getting fed up going out at 9.00pm every night to check which cows were bulling. The results were phenomenal. Within a few weeks of installation, we were achieving 96% heat detection on bulling cows," recalls Mr Cookson.

"It wasn't just this. We were also spotting sick cows, since the technology tracks ear temperature too. It makes sure that we don't miss any issues.

"One of our units has a 260-cow flying herd and, 12 hours after giving the latest purchased cows their second Lepto vaccine jab, we noticed that a number were demonstrating raised temperatures. Consequently, we were able to administer an anti-inflammatory. Without CowManager we wouldn't have noticed the reaction until milk started to drop.

"On a different scale, one of the dry cows generated an alert in response to lack of activity. We went to find her and discovered a twisted uterus. With early action we saved the cow and her twin

calves," explains Mr Cookson.

"The system provides me with herd visibility even if I am 100 miles away. It enables the herd manager on each of the units to spend a few minutes throughout the day checking through the real time data transmitted by the ear sensors. This is collected by routers and transferred to an App on their phones, or on the farm office PC.

"And there's accountability. If they are away for the weekend, then they can pick up on what's been happening when they return," he adds.

Berwick Home Farm

Berwick Home Farm, Shrewsbury, has been home to a Jersey herd for over 150 years. At one time the herd was managed by numerous staff. But now the 400-cow herd—managed by Yareal since 2019—is under a team of four.

Since the company took over the herd, yield has increased by 14% to 7,200 litres with an accompanying 10% increase in solids.

Silage Additives for Grass, Wholecrop and Maize

Fully Approved
Are you using
The Best Additives
at the Lowest Prices?

Call now
for best price

Make Better Silage
Save Concentrates
Reduce Costs
Save Money



Richard Webster
07703 203 686
www.rwn.org.uk



Health problems at Berrwick Home Farm have been picked up early by the new cow monitoring system.

Target yield has recently been reset to 7,800 litres.

Calving index has fallen by 25 days to an average 395 days, pregnancy rate currently stands at 32%,

and, while being a specific focus, submission rate has improved by almost 50% to a current 73%.

"The biggest driver for fertility is getting the cow in calf as

soon as possible, and we try from 50 days. CowManager has taken over traditional heat detection that required three sets of observations amounting to an hour of staff time

a day. The system is providing us with accurate information that is significantly helping us to improve herd efficiency," says Mr Cookson. "The system has also reduced the herd's vet and medicine bills by 0.45p/litre in the last two years, by simply providing accurate herd health information. The sensor measures each individual's time spent feeding, lying, ruminating and resting, along with ear temperature, and has picked up a range of health issues which we wouldn't have had the same awareness of.

"For example, we check for any cows demonstrating less time eating and more time spending lying down. The system frequently alerts us to a mastitis incidence 24 hours ahead of clinical evidence. This helps us to make an early decision on treatment, invariably reduced antimicrobial usage which in turn helps us to fulfil the milk contract.

"Interestingly, while we've found variation in behaviour between cows, individuals remain relatively very consistent," Mr Cookson adds.

KNOW the SCORE

for higher pregnancy rates

ESTROTECT™

BREEDING INDICATOR

Don't just detect cows for heat.

Using EstroTECT™ Breeding Indicators, identify when cows are ready to breed when the Breeding BullsEye™ or equivalent area rubs off.

Born from university research, the Breeding BullsEye supports a unique patch scoring system to determine estrus intensity.

Scores of 3 and 4? Breed cows with up to 3x higher pregnancy rates. Scores of 1 and 2? Hold off on breeding.

Make easy yes or no breeding decisions with the EstroTECT Breeding Indicator.



AS GOOD AS A BULL™

Dairymac
Animal Health Products
INNOVATION • QUALITY • VALUE

www.dairymac.com
www.estroTECT.com
sales@dairymac.com
01489 894447
James Mob. 07872 161128

DON'T BREED

BREED

For a sample pack and stockists in the UK call James on 07872 161128

Dairymac Ltd, Lakeview, Unit C Waltham Business Park,
Brickyard Road, Swammore, Southampton SO32 2SA