NRM 2017

Looking back on the NRM 2017 we can conclude that it was again a very nice edition! CRV showed 6 daughter groups in the ring. You can read all about their performance on our website. Next to the daughter groups, we as International Business Development also had many international visitors over who visited several Dutch dairy farms, joined the CRV barbecue and party and were the first visitors of CRV’s Dairy Breeding Center. Below an impression of all the activities.

ALFRED DE VRIES HAS DECIDED TO WITHDRAW AS A BOARD MEMBER OF CRV

The reason for Alfred de Vries's departure as a board member of CRV is a joint investigation of the supervisory board and the board of CRV to the desired top structure towards the future. The contours of this top structure are a reason for De Vries to continue his career outside CRV from January 1, 2018. Alfred de Vries retires immediately as statutory director. In the coming months, he will complete his work and is still available for performing a number of CRV projects.

Ten years working for CRV

De Vries has worked for CRV for ten years and has been part of CRV’s management board since early 2015. He has been working for CRV since 2007, among other things as manager Genetic Products, wherein he managed the breeding, R & D and production departments. Before he started working at CRV, De Vries spent 18 years in pig farming.

CRV DAIRY BREEDING CENTER OFFICIALLY OPENED

On the 22nd of September CRV’s Dairy Breeding Center is officially opened. The commissioner of the King in Friesland, Arno Brok, conducted the official opening in Wirdum. He revealed an image of Delta Futura, the cow of the future. Delta Futura is made by Pieter van Goor, breeding specialist of CRV. Pieter explains: “Delta Futura is a timeless cow with tight lines, she imagines the future of dairy farming.” There’s also made a video of the official opening, which can be seen on CRV’s YouTube page.

Indian group on a sightseeing day

Pakistanian group at dairy farm Huetink

South African group at dairy farm Lekkerkerker

Cyprus group at dairy farm Sterksel Holsteins

CRV DAIRY BREEDING CENTER

OFFICIALLY OPENED
TOOL OFFERS SOLUTION TO HEAT DETECTION IN A 'QUIET' HERD

TURNING UP THE HEAT

Missing too many heats was the catalyst for investing in automated detection for one Lancashire-based producer. We spoke to him to find out more about the benefits of installing a simple, but effective, heat detection system.

text Rachael Portor

High yields and a hectic working day were just two contributory factors to ‘weak’ signs of heat and poor heat detection rates, in Liam Baxter’s 120-cow pedigree Holstein herd. “The only quiet time – when cows were most likely to show any signs of bulling – were evenings. And, by our own admission, we were missing heats. This was compounded by the fact that any signs that they did show were not particularly strong,” says Liam.

Liam farms in partnership with his father Clive and they run the pedigree Wickster herd, close to Morecambe in Lancashire. The herd calves all year round, but with a large autumn block.

Detection tool

“We didn’t realise just how ‘quiet’ some of our cows’ heats were, until we had a cystic heifer, who was constantly bulling, in the herd. She was a brilliant detection tool – she picked up a lot of heats that we just didn’t, and with hindsight probably couldn’t, see. We kept her for a few months and when we finally sold her it brought it home to us that we really needed to do something to improve our heat detection rate,” explains Liam.

Liam adds that they’re also detecting far more cows in heat and serving a larger proportion of the herd by 60 days post calving. “We’ve seen a huge difference already and, due to that, we really trust the system. We still walk around the cow at night – once the cows had finished feeding after their evening milking and all was calm in the cow shed. We knew that the cows were cycling – the vet confirmed that.

“Our vet, Andrew Rutherford, checked anything that we’d not seen bulling 60 days post calving. So we know that the problem wasn’t with the cows – fertility was good. We just weren’t seeing any outward physical signs of heat. He adds that during the past couple of years, heats have become ‘quieter’ and difficult to spot. “We’ve been looking, but there’s just not been a lot of activity. It could be that the cows don’t, in our experience, show such strong physical signs of heat. So, in that respect, moving to a heat detection system like Ovalert was inevitable,” adds Liam. “It was either that or someone would have to be watching the cows 24/7. But then, in effect, that’s what the system is doing.”

Liam, who is in charge of running and managing the system, says that simplicity is key to its success. “I wanted something that would help us to work ‘smarter’ and help us to improve the efficiency of our herd.” And so far, he’s extremely pleased with the system. “It takes readings from the cows throughout the day – every five minutes – and sends them back to the computerised control panel. If there are any sudden fluctuations, which could indicate heat, I’m alerted by a message on my phone. Then I can assess the cow and decide if I should AI her.”

Sire recommendations

This system is also connected to CRV SireMatch and sire recommendations are suggested with each alert.

“It allows me determine, prior to milking, which cows I need to separate for AI. Other systems on the market rely on readers in the parlour. But it’s good to know before milking which cows need to be separated,” Liam explains.

“I’m really looking forward to seeing what our 100-day in-calf rate is by this coming November – 12 months after installing the system. And it will be interesting to see what our calving interval is. I think we’ll be close to 400 days, if not lower!”

Calving interval

Although Liam only wanted help with heat detection, the system can also offer health monitoring, by recording standing, lying and rumination activity.

They bought 60 collars, with transponders, for the herd and the system has already paid for itself, according to Liam, even though they only began using it in November 2016. “Our calving interval has already dropped by several days – from 415 to 410 – so we’ve already seen a return on our investment and it’s still early days.”

Before installing the Ovalert system, the herd’s rolling 12-month average for days to conception was around 139 and just 7% of the herd was a brilliant detection tool – she picked up a lot of heats that we just didn’t, and with hindsight probably couldn’t, see. We kept her for a few months and when we finally sold her it brought it home to us that we really needed to do something to improve our heat detection rate,” explains Liam.

He adds that during the past couple of years, heats have become ‘quieter’ and difficult to spot. “We’ve been looking, but there’s just not been a lot of activity. It could be that much of it was going on at night – once the cows had finished feeding after their evening milking and all was calm in the cow shed. We knew that the cows were cycling – the vet confirmed that.

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Liam and Clive decided to look at heat detection systems and that’s when CRV’s Ovalert caught their eye. “We looked at quite a few systems, but most of them had other functions as well as heat detection. We didn’t want that – we wanted something simple. Something that would do what we wanted it to do and do it well,” explains Liam.

“The other systems we looked at were overly complicated, in our opinion. We wanted something that would alert us, via mobile phone or tablet, when a cow is in heat.”

The price of the system stacked up too. “We felt that it offered the best value for money and we weren’t paying for a lot of ‘add ons’ that we didn’t want.”

Liam explains.

“Collaring’ cows: catching cows in heat is easy with the monitoring system in place.

He adds that they’re also detecting far more cows in heat and serving a larger proportion of the herd by 60 days post calving. “We’ve seen a huge difference already and, due to that, we really trust the system. We still walk around the cow at night, just before bed, out of habit, more than anything. But we don’t need to. The system has typically picked up bulling cows before we actually see any signs ourselves.”

Before installing the Ovalert system, the herd’s rolling 12-month average for days to conception was around 139 and just 7% of the herd was in calf 60 days post calving. “But now we are running at an average of 115 days to conception and the herd’s 60-day pregnancy rate is 19%. That’s a huge improvement in just six months.”

There have still been a few cows and heifers that the vet has needed to check, but they’ve been the higher yielders in the herd and haven’t been bulling strongly. “At 60 or 70 days in milk, they’re producing 50 litres a day. With yields like that we can let them slide a little. It could be that much of it was going on at night – once the cows had finished feeding after their evening milking and all was calm in the cow shed. We knew that the cows were cycling – the vet confirmed that.

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Liam, who is in charge of running and managing the system, says that simplicity is key to its success. “I wanted something that would help us to work ‘smarter’ and help us to improve the efficiency of our herd.” And so far, he’s extremely pleased with the system. “It takes readings from the cows throughout the day – every five minutes – and sends them back to the computerised control panel. If there are any sudden fluctuations, which could indicate heat, I’m alerted by a message on my phone. Then I can assess the cow and decide if I should AI her.”

Liam Baxter: “We’re pleased with how the system – and our cows – are performing”
**Butlerview Gold Medal**
(SuperShot x Halogen)

Winning a gold medal at the Olympics very often means making a lot of money. And that is what the dam and sister to Gold Medal have made. Gold Medal daughters will be stylish, healthy and efficient. Their udders will be wide and well attached and they will also show a lot of depth and strength. Breeding healthy and efficient cows is why CRV is in this business and with low SCS, a positive DPI, high productive life in combination with high fat and protein this bull is a nice addition to our portfolio for farmers who wish to achieve that. Mixing Gold Medal daughters will make a winner from every farmer in the world!

**Jupiter**
(Amigo x Snoothrower)

Jupiter is one of the Amigo icons in the Holstein portfolio. Jupiter is truly groundbreaking with 100 kg milk, positive protein percentage in combination with a breeding value of 107 for daughter fertility. Like his half-brother Beatbox also Jupiter improves every health trait. Besides high daughter fertility he also has 108 for hoof health, 104 for ketosis, 111 for calving ease and 106 vitality. Jupiler himself has more daughters of a calving ease than any other bull. He also has 108 for hoof health, 104 for ketosis, 111 for calving ease and 106 vitality. Jupiler has no interest in old rules like Hoof Health, Longevity, Fertility and Persistency. Jupiler is from the “J” family. The family has a strong Doe and panel representativeness in Germany, the Netherlands and the USA.

**Remmel**
(Scrui x Mungo)

Remmel is a very efficient Fleckvieh bull. His daughters stand out for their strong conformation, a lot of capacity, good udders, strong legs and healthy claws. The udders are remarkable, long, shallow, and an almost perfect teat placement. “The udders are of a remarkable high level and Remmel therefore belongs to the absolute top of the Fleckvieh bulls,” explains Johannsen Vorst of CRV Germany. “This longevity has a plus, because his daughters have very good udder health and less problems with ketosis.” Remmel daughters have another outstanding characteristic: their nice character.

**Peak Dirk**
(Broyner's Distinction)

Farmers who want to breed healthy and efficient can't afford to miss Peak Dirk. Dirk is from a very high type cow family. The great granddam of Dirk, Ronelee Outside Dabble EX91 is also known as the dam of O Daddy, the sire of the InSire Top bull Koepon. Dirks dam of O Daddy, the sire of Gold Medal daughters will be very productive (high milk production), a lot of capacity, good udders and healthy claws. The udders are remarkable: long, shallow, and an almost perfect teat placement. “The udders are of a remarkable high level and Remmel therefore belongs to the absolute top of the Fleckvieh bulls,” explains Johannsen Vorst of CRV Germany. “This longevity has a plus, because his daughters have very good udder health and less problems with ketosis.” Remmel daughters have another outstanding characteristic: their nice character.

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FIRST HOTLINE CALVES

Have you already seen the first Hotline calves? In Canada and the UK the first nice Hotline calves are born and some of them already got an introduction on the Facebook pages of CRV Canada and CRV Avoncroft.

Hotline Dora (Peek Hotline x McCutcheon) the first one and possibly the first daughter in the UK.

Sledgestar Hotline April at Rietveld Dairies, Canada (3306 DGV LPI, +1735 Milk, +18 Con)

In September CRV organized together with Coopers Kenya a training for A.I. technicians. Representative Linda Hoekstra visited Eldoret in Kenya to train about 100 A.I. technicians in the region about Dutch genetics and data management. The number of A.I. technicians that showed up is a good indication for the eagerness of the A.I. technicians to improve knowledge and skills in Kenya. The A.I. technicians were particularly interested in the effects of body condition score and locomotion on fertility. Some participants informed Linda that very often farmers call them with a skinny cow in heat. Of course the semen and the A.I. technicians get blamed when these cows don’t get pregnant. An impossible situation where farmers and A.I. technicians start to lose trust in each other. There were also three important representatives of the Department of Veterinary Services present. They are amongst other topics, responsible for training and certification of the A.I. technicians. It was good to have government officials present so they become aware of the struggles of all parties and hopefully can help in solving the problems Kenyans are facing. After a few hours of training, the meeting was ended with a good Kenyan lunch.

WEST MORELAND SHOW
UNITED KINGDOM

Last 14 September, CRV Avoncroft was present at the West Moreland Show in the UK. And they also introduced Ovalert with their nice new demo board.

A.I. TECHNICIANS TRAINING IN KENYA

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FLECKVIEH PRODUCER MEETING
IN THE USA

Tobias Lerner, Global Product Manager Fleckvieh, has been to Madison (USA) to take part in the Fleckvieh producer meeting, organized by CRV USA. Besides a producer meeting, they also organized a Fleckvieh tour. During the tour they visited crossbreeding farm Johnson Farms LLC in Peninsula, Michigan, with 1600 cows. On this farm the first Illuminati and Web daughters will start producing soon and later on they are also expecting production of daughters of Vox, Walk and Voco. The first Haribo calves are about 2 to 4 months old.

The average production of this farm is 13,000kg. In order to achieve an even higher selection on the female side, they are using SiryX semen. About 40 people are working on the farm, full time and part time.

Photo above: Johnson Farms LLC
Photo below: Fleckvieh meeting
NEW CRV TEST FARM IN BELGIUM

Since this year the farm of family De Cock in Sint-Laureins (Belgium) is also a CRV test farm. This means that heifers that are embryo donors for CRV are placed at this farm, calve at the farm, and are now competing with their own animals.

Family De Cock is milking 300 cows. The average production is 10,400kg of milk with 4.23% fat and 3.57% protein. With the Delta heifers, the family hopes to increase the production. 25 Delta heifers have been moved to Sint-Laureins. In June already 14 of them have calved, whereof 12 of them got a female calf. The family, of course, was very happy with that.

The first MPR (milk production recording) results were a first test for the new heifers. The average milk production of the first 9 heifers was 35.5kg per day, whereof 3 animals gave more than 40kg per day. The first 7 animals are already classified by classifier Mieke Vander Schueren. The average score of the animals was 84.7 points. Delta Hetty scored by far the best. This Balisto daughter has got 87 points for total score. CRV has also bought back a very good Paragon son of this cow.

Delta Hetty (s. Balisto)

Family De Cock and their employee Thomas De Brabander