

LETTERS

■ ■ HERD HEALTH

Mastitis control plan

Further to our letter in *The Veterinary Record* of March 3, 2007 (Green and others 2007a), we wish to inform colleagues of a national mastitis control initiative, encompassing the launch of the evidence-based DairyCo Mastitis Control Plan. This control plan has evolved from earlier approaches, drawing on current knowledge and research. The first step entails a diagnosis based on mastitis patterns on an individual unit. The second step involves generating a structured list of recommendations in a hierarchical format, designed to maximise the impact of management changes. The effectiveness of the plan has been demonstrated and the results published previously (Bradley and others 2007, Green and others 2007b). In addition, a pilot project conducted with 20 veterinary surgeons during 2006/07 highlighted areas by which uptake of the plan could be improved, including additional training.

The current initiative is being funded by DairyCo (formerly the Milk Development Council), which is facilitating the development of a number of electronic resources and a website, as well as supporting implementation of the mastitis control plan on 750 farms over the next three years. The aim is to identify a team of UK veterinary surgeons to work in a collaborative manner to initiate and develop a widespread mastitis control scheme. The first steps in the initiative are to train users in the implementation of the DairyCo Mastitis Control Plan and to provide initial support to carry out the plan on up to five farms.

We have already had a number of expressions of interest from veterinary surgeons wishing to take part in the initiative, and we would be delighted to hear from other colleagues who may be interested in participating in what is an excellent opportunity to improve dairy cow health and welfare. We would ask colleagues who have not already registered their interest to contact us as soon as possible by e-mail: mastitiscontrol@qmms.co.uk. The intention is to begin training courses in May and June of this year.

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