

# British Cattle Breeders Club

Virtual Conference  
Tuesday 25th January 2022

[www.cattlebreeders.org.uk](http://www.cattlebreeders.org.uk)

President: Mike Coffey  
Chair: Karen Wonnacott  
Secretary: Heidi Bradbury



## A Breath of Fresh Air



### A message from the Chair, Dr Karen Wonnacott

Following on from the resounding success of our first ever virtual Conference, we took the difficult decision to opt for the same format again this year. With so much uncertainty still surrounding Covid-19, we felt it was the safest decision for our speakers, delegates and for the future of the Club. It goes without saying that I will be very sad not to be seeing you all in person!

It is a huge honour and privilege to be Chairman of the Club this year and I am so looking forward to A Breath of Fresh Air and all that it has to offer. We have secured some incredible speakers from home and abroad and look forward to delving deeper into the technological advancements and practical applications of science to move forward breeding and genetics, as well as discussing important subjects for our industry such as mental health and resilience. We have a great evening panel lined up for you too, hosted by our very own President, Professor Mike Coffey so please do join in for the discussion on the Future of Cattle Breeding: 2030 and beyond.

It has been a challenging time for everyone, but we hope that we have developed a Conference programme that will provide a great platform for exchanging new ideas, generating debate and discussion, and meeting old and new friends (albeit virtually)!

As a Club, we pride ourselves on attracting a huge diversity of farmers, researchers, students, lecturers and industry professionals, in addition to the next generation of young people looking to make their way into the industry. This provides the perfect opportunity for discussing and sharing ideas, challenging and encouraging debate and driving businesses forward. Our speakers this year will push the breeding, genetics, and environmental envelope even further and will take sound science and show us how to put it into practice on farm.

I would like to thank all our sponsors for their support, which has enabled us to deliver the Conference, and also all of those who have supported us as we adapt to the new platforms and technologies in our ever-changing world! Many thanks to our speakers, session chairs and technical support behind the scenes and thank you also to the BCBC Committee, particularly my Vice Chair, Amy Hughes, Treasurer, Andy Dodd and our amazingly patient and fantastic Club Secretary, Heidi Bradbury, who has managed to pull everyone and everything together in very challenging circumstances.

I believe that it is a fantastic time to be involved in beef and dairy and we have a great many opportunities to capitalise on. I hope that you enjoy BCBC 2022 A Breath of Fresh Air and that you log out feeling enthused, motivated, informed and inspired to embrace the technological developments, strive to keep moving forward and feel (as I most certainly do) very lucky to be working in our fantastic cattle industry!



#cattlebreeders2022

**British Cattle Breeders Club**

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## A Breath of Fresh Air



### Register to Access the 2022 Virtual Conference

**Membership/Delegate Fee of £45 gives access to the Virtual Conference & Membership of BCBC for 2022**

Title: ..... Delegate Name: .....

Address: .....

..... Postcode: .....

Telephone: ..... Mobile: .....

Email (Required to access the conference) : .....

Please Circle:    Farmer                      Industry                      Research                      Breed Society                      Other

Where did you hear about the BCBC Conference? .....

#### Payment Methods:

- Book and pay online at [www.cattlebreeders.org.uk](http://www.cattlebreeders.org.uk)
- By Card over the phone, please forward the completed form and call the secretary on 07966 032079
- By BACS - CAF Bank; Sort Code: 40 52 40 Account: 00023696
- By Cheque made payable to British Cattle Breeders Club and post with completed form to: BCBC Underhill Farm, Glutton Bridge, Earl Sterndale, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 0RN

#### Delegate signature:

.....

Date: .....

I agree to the terms specified and give consent to BCBC to use my data for BCBC purposes as per the BCBC Privacy Policy (available at [www.cattlebreeders.org.uk](http://www.cattlebreeders.org.uk))



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## 09.00 Club Chair Dr Karen Wonnacott opens the conference

**SESSION 1** (sponsored by ADF Milking): **Resilience – Accepting the new reality and planning for the future**  
**Chair: Karen Wonnacott**



### 09.05 Nigel Owens MBE, former International Rugby Union Referee and Beef Farmer

*Building Mental Resilience for a positive farming future*

"The mind is a powerful tool that can be positive and helpful, as well as negative and destructive" Nigel Owens MBE, beef farmer, keen advocate for mental health and the most capped referee in world rugby, will talk to us about building and nurturing mental resilience to allow us to grasp opportunities as they arise during this challenging, but exciting, time in British agricultural history.

### 09.35 Steve McLean, Head of Agriculture & Fisheries, Marks & Spencer, North Wharf Road, London

*Adapting to change in order to succeed*

We are facing huge change in British agriculture. Climate disruption and pressure to achieve net zero, developments to agricultural support, changing consumer expectations and new international trade arrangements will all impact on livestock farmers, who will need to adapt their businesses to succeed. Steve McLean, Head of Agriculture & Fisheries at M&S Food will explore what today's consumers want from farmers and how this, along with other factors, will impact technical innovation at farm level as farmers adapt to the changing market requirements.

### 10.05 Live Q&A followed by a Coffee Break

### BEEF SESSION 2: Sustainable Beef Breeding

**Chair: Amy Hughes**

#### 10.45 Sarah Haire, Head of Agriculture for Dawn Meats/ Dunbia & Chair of UK Cattle Sustainability Platform, Ireland

*Improving the sustainability of Beef across the supply chain*

Sustainability has been at the heart of our business strategy for over 10 years and we are working across the supply chain with customers and suppliers, as well as collaborating with industry bodies such as the ERBS and UKCSP, to ensure we produce a product that delivers against the growing expectations of our end consumers whilst supporting farmers in creating a thriving agricultural sector.

#### 11.15 Seth Wareing, Stabiliser Cattle Company, Driffield

*The impact of management and breed on the carbon footprint of beef*

The UK beef industry is in a unique position to deliver quality beef with a low carbon footprint, sustainably, ethically and profitably for all members of the supply chain. Production efficiencies, carbon efficiencies and profitability do not need to be opposing forces. By utilising the best management practices and genetics beef producers can have a big impact on the carbon produced by their stock.

#### 11.45 Billy O'Kane, Farmer & Vet, Ballymena, Northern Ireland

*Carbon Audit of a 250 Cow Suckler to Beef Herd. Release v Sequestration*

Beef production in the UK and Climate Change. Are we the problem or are we part of the solution? In 2021, with the assistance of a PhD student we undertook a detailed Carbon audit on our 500-acre Suckler to Beef farm. After a literature review and physical measurements, we calculated our total farm Carbon output and total farm Carbon Sequestration using both GWP 100 and GWP\* and here are the results.

### 12.15 Live Q&A followed by Lunch Break

### 12.45 - 13.15 Lunchtime Workshop with our Principal Sponsor - ADF Milking

*Stress-free Milking for You and Your Cows*

James Duke introduces the concept of "intelligent venting" to help combat the adverse effects of high vacuum levels on teat health. Hear, directly from farmers, their first-hand experience of the difference intelligent venting makes to their herds – more comfortable milking, faster milk let-down, more complete milk-out and higher yields. The brand-new ADF InVent milking system pushes clean, filtered air into the mouthpiece of the liner when vacuum rises to a threshold level, maintaining the ideal "sweet spot" for cow comfort and peak milk flow. A breath of fresh air for stress-free milking – literally!

### DAIRY SESSION 2 (sponsored by AbacusBio):

#### Sustainable Dairy Breeding

**Chair: Andy Dodd**



#### 10.45 Marco Winters, Head of Animal Genetics, AHDB Dairy

*Breeding for Net Zero*

Genetics will play a key role in the industry reaching its Net Zero target. The good news is that those who have been using the £PLI index, will already have contributed significantly towards this target. But new AHDB dairy breeding indexes are now available to help us more precisely target future genetic selection. Do you know how the Maintenance index, Feed Advantage and EnviroCow index can help you?

#### 11.15 Andrew Rutter, Partner at Clayhanger Farm Partnership & Herd Manager, Cheshire

*Form versus Function - How I am using genetics to deliver a cow fit for purpose at Clayhanger*

After nearly 20 years working for a genetics company, I had the opportunity to come home and take over the responsibility of breeding the herd of nearly 400 cows plus followers. The remit I set myself is; How can I breed her to be more efficient, more environmentally friendly, easier to care for, more sustainable and more profitable... and what will she look like?

#### 11.45 Mark Brooking, Sustainability Director, First Milk

*How Dairy Farmers can be part of the climate solution*

Dairy farmers have been highlighted as significant contributors to global warming. The work we are undertaking with our members aims to demonstrate that not only can we produce highly nutritious dairy products we can actually be part of the climate change solution. This will be achieved by adopting regenerative farming principles.

### 12.15 Live Q&A followed by Lunch Break



**BEEF SESSION 3: The appliance of science and technology to improve genetics and breeding****Chair: Anya Westland****13.30 Desi Cicale, Founder & CEO, Meat Imaging USA***Advanced Carcase Grading Technology - what benefits can it bring to UK producers?*

Meat Imaging's grading technology, an advanced digital analysis system for measuring carcase merit will soon be introduced to the UK through the British Wagyu Breeders Association. Desi will explain 'the bigger picture' the science behind the imagery, how the technology captures carcase data, how it is used and what benefits it can bring to UK farmers.

**14.00 Prof. Jonathan M E Statham MA VetMB DCHP FRCVS, Chief Executive RAFT Solutions/Chair Bishopton Veterinary Group/Prof. of Sustainable Livestock Health & Welfare Harper & Keele Veterinary School***New Developments in Advanced Breeding Technologies and Phenotyping: Semenrate in UK & Canada*

UKRI has pledged over £2.2m to seven agri-tech firms with Canadian partners to fund the development of new agricultural techniques that will help both countries meet their net zero emission targets. One of the UK companies was RAFT Solutions, with their Canadian partner Bow Valley Genetics and XL Vets groups in both countries. This work will explore the role of germplasm quality and transport as part of achieving sustainable genetic progress and seek to establish phenotyping data across both countries in both sustainable dairy and beef breeding.

**14.30 Steven Sandison, Farmer, Harray, Orkney***How many calves can 100 cows wean realistically?*

Being first generation farmers and starting from scratch has its advantages; One of which is having a clean slate which, from the outset, allowed us to try to achieve recognised KPIs for suckler cows. The purpose of my Nuffield Scholarship was to answer 2 questions; 1) What is a realistic weaning % and 2) How do you achieve this?

**15.00 Live Q&A followed by a Break****SESSION 4 (sponsored by AHDB): Looking forward – Being part of the solution****Chair: Lucy Andrews-Noden****15.35 Prof. Myles Allen, Prof. of Geosystem Science & Head of the Climate Dynamics Group, University of Oxford***Methane, Agriculture and Climate*

The Challenge: Methane is a major driver of global warming and the global livestock industry is a substantial contributor. The Obstacle: Widespread misunderstanding of the influence of methane on global climate with "CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent-emissions" used in all "carbon footprint" calculations which either overstate the warming impact of an established methane source x 3-4 or understate the impact of new methane source or sink, x 4-5 for 20 years. The Opportunity: Re-focus climate policy on warming outcomes and recognize positive contribution that the livestock sector can make.

**16.15 Prof. Jude Capper PhD, ARAgS, ABP Chair of Sustainable Beef & Sheep Production, Harper Adams University***From the first AI to technologies of the future – what role do genetics play in improving sustainability?*

The cattle industry has made huge gains in breeding and genetics over the past 70 years, from Sir John Hammond's revolutionary work, including pioneering studies on artificial insemination, to the genomic tools and evaluations available today. So just how far have these gains brought us in terms of improving sustainability, and what challenges and opportunities do we face in the future?

**16.55 Live Q&A** followed by the Chair, Dr Karen Wonnacott, to close the day sessions & invites delegates to join us at 7.30pm for the live conference finale

**DAIRY SESSION 3: The appliance of science and technology to improve genetics and breeding****Chair: Tim Gue****13.30 Claire Phyn PhD, BAppSc (Hons), DairyNZ Ltd, NZ***Unlocking the secrets to improving cow fertility genetics*

This presentation will outline key findings from a long-term research programme investigating novel traits to improve genetic merit for fertility. In particular, the potential to use earlier-in-life phenotypes, such as timing of puberty, as predictor traits to accelerate genetic improvement in fertility will be discussed along with using activity monitoring devices to measure traits related to oestrus characteristics and resumption of cycling postpartum.

**14.00 Dr Andy Borrowman DVM, Veterinary Surgeon, Idaho, USA***Getting Started in OPU: a Veterinary Perspective*

Andy will give a brief history and explanation of Ovum Pick Up (OPU). How to design an on-farm facility, including details on the necessary equipment, personnel and training required to the practical considerations for donors such as age, size, nutrition, vaccines, follicle counts, sedation. He will explain how to stimulate the ovaries and why this is necessary. The OPU process from a veterinary perspective.

**14.30 Kevin Tluczek, Snake River Dairies, Idaho, USA***Using genomic data along with OPU & IVF to accelerate genetic progress*

Kevin will give delegates an insight to his on-farm Ovum Pick Up (OPU) lab. How and why, this came about and what was involved in setting up the facility. The presentation will cover the benefits that using this technology has had for the business including how it has affected the overall herd performance and herd genetics.

**15.00 Live Q&A followed by a Break****Evening Panel Live Q&A Sponsored by ADF Milking****19.30 Evening Panel Session with Chair, Prof. Mike Coffey****Future of Cattle Breeding: 2030 and beyond**

The need to build resilience within the industry for a sustainable future is a certainty. Join us for a live, informal, progressive and innovative discussion looking ahead to the future of cattle breeding. The challenges the industry may encounter and how to embrace them using the tools available to us.

**Dr Donagh Berry, BAgSc, MSc, PhD** - A beef and sheep farmer, and statistical geneticist at the Teagasc Research Center, Ireland where he is responsible for research on the genetics of cattle and sheep in Ireland.

**Liz Ford** - The Agricultural Projects Manager at ABP UK. Interested in farm to fork factors that influence carcase and meat quality and the promotion of sustainable production systems.

**Arla Representative** - Arla believes its the decade for dairy, hear what they have to say in this enlightening, innovative discussion.