



British Cattle Breeders Conference 2017

Preview and Autumn 2016 Newsletter

The Cattle Breeders Conference 2017 will be held at the Telford Hotel and Golf Resort in Shropshire on 23-25 January. This year, the conference theme is: 'Practical Innovation – Today's Challenges for Tomorrow's Generation.'

A message from the BCBC chairman, Iain Kerr



Welcome to the 2017 British Cattle Breeders' Conference (BCBC).

Since its inception some sixty eight years ago, the BCBC has become a unique event, renowned for its mix of practical, high quality speakers. With the future of cattle breeding at heart, it links a wide spectrum of farmers, scientists, students and industry influencers. BCBC is a fantastic forum to kick off the New Year, challenging ideas, introducing new science and technologies and providing the opportunity to meet people, stimulate thought, debate and discuss.

The 2017 BCBC Conference will of course be the first since the Brexit vote and held in a year that will likely be a formative one for UK agricultural and political history.

We have seen over many years how cattle breeding has greatly benefitted from the dynamic integration of science, new technologies, and innovation. In this 'new era' I have no doubt that science and innovation will never have been more important for farmers now and for future generations. New thinking, and strengthening the ability to innovate, will provide the advances and improvements that will increase efficiencies and produce populations of animals that can respond to the demands of a changing market place and deliver profitability. As we look to a market driven economy that will expect high levels of production efficiency, and will demand producer response to a wider agenda of competing challenges such as climate change, health and animal welfare, there is a need for us to examine whether the genetics we propagate at herd and breed level will deliver what will be required.

By the nature of cattle breeding new science adopted today may take years to deliver its full reward. What science, new technology and innovation can add value to beef and dairy production in the short and medium term? Also, in this time of challenge for tomorrow's generation how do we engage young people, encourage their passion for agriculture and secure their future?

The 2017 BCBC programme has been carefully crafted around these points and lies behind the theme of 'Practical Innovation – Today's Challenges for Tomorrow's Generation'.

A huge thank you is extended to everyone who has contributed in so many ways towards the 2017 British Cattle Breeders Conference. First and foremost we have a rich mix of domestic and international speakers and I'd like to thank them for their ready willingness to attend. We are indebted to all of our sponsors for their invaluable support and in particular the mainline sponsors Afimilk; AHDB; ASDA; Mole Valley Farmers; and Waitrose. I'd like to personally thank the members of the BCBC Committee for their ideas, input and hard work towards the construction of the 2017 programme. A warm and sincere thank you also to Heidi Bradbury the BCBC Conference Organiser who so effortlessly gets the job done and makes it all happen.

I have been attending the BCBC as a delegate for some twenty years so to now be the Chairman of the 2017 Conference is truly a great honour. It is very much my hope that as delegates you enjoy the programme and the people, and leave the 2017 BCBC informed, full of ideas, and with the energy and vision to embrace practical innovation and add value to every level of our great beef and dairy industries. I look forward to seeing you there.

Iain Kerr 2017 BCBC Chairman



Follow the build up to, and the BCBC 2017 conference as it happens, on facebook and twitter or through www.cattlebreeders.org.uk

The Speakers and Conference Preview

British Cattle Breeders Conference 2017

The British Cattle Breeders Conference is hosted every January by the British Cattle Breeders Club. The conference is a truly international occasion, providing a unique opportunity to meet other breeders and scientists in a warm and friendly environment.

Day delegate prices start from £145. Membership of the club is not a requirement for attendance, but a 20% discount on Conference registration fees is offered to members.

The full British Cattle Breeders Conference programme and online booking will be available on our website www.cattlebreeders.org.uk from early November.

Accommodation at the Conference hotel, which has its own spa and swimming pool, can be reserved, although places are limited. All bookings can be made through the BCBC secretary, Heidi Bradbury: heidi.bradbury@cattlebreeders.org.uk

Grateful thanks goes to all of our sponsors, the 2017 major sponsors are:



"For NMR, we feel it a necessity to be part of the British Cattle Conference. As sponsors, we are able to engage with our customers at the highest level and are also included in arguably one of the most important environments within Britain, in terms of cattle breeding."



AHDB Dairy is delighted to be sponsoring the British Cattle Breeders Conference in January. We look forward to contributing to next year's exciting programme and discussing the latest advances in breeding and genetics.' Andy Dodd - AHDB Dairy technical manager.



Sponsorship opportunities are still available for the 2017 conference, please contact the secretary for further details

Dairy Pro Members

The British Cattle Conference 2017 is registered with Dairy Pro, the industry's training and development scheme; Dairy Pro points can be gained through attending the conference.



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Published by:

Shepherd Publishing
Burnt House Garden,
North Common,
North Chailey,
East Sussex BN84DJ
Tel: 01684 565533.
Publisher: Howard Venters
Editors: Heidi Bradbury
and Wendy Short

The Speakers and Conference Preview



Mark Berrisford-Smith,
Understanding the effect
of the UK's vote to leave
the EU

The programme for the 2017 British Cattle Breeders Conference has been announced and here is a snapshot preview of just some of the keynote speakers.

Mark Berrisford-Smith

Head of Economics, HSBC's Commercial Banking Business in the UK
'Understanding the effect of the UK's vote to leave the EU'

Having studied Economics at Sussex and London Universities, Mark Berrisford-Smith is Head of Economics for HSBC's commercial banking business in the UK. He is responsible for advising the Bank in the UK and its business customers on developments in the British and global economies with a particular interest in monitoring the performance of European countries and China. HSBC have been recognised as market-leading in their response to the result of the EU referendum. This session will cover what Brexit means for business and the big choices that have to be made.

What are the opportunities for farming and tomorrow's generation of beef producers in post Brexit Britain?

Presentations and panel discussion

George Lyon

Independent Director AHDB, Isle of Bute, Scotland
'The clock is ticking towards post-Brexit Britain'

George Lyon is a former MEP and NFU Scotland Chairman. Presently he is an Independent Director of AHDB and Chair of the Meat and Livestock Commercial Services Ltd.

"UK beef producers face a substantial strategic challenge from Brexit. New trade deals will bring more competition and there are serious question marks over future support. How does the industry respond to that challenge? Are there opportunities for UK beef producers or only threats? The clock has already started ticking towards March 2019 and the industry needs to start planning for a post Brexit future now."



Professor Nigel Scollan,
Meeting the challenges
post-Brexit Britain

Professor Nigel Scollan

Director of Institute for Food Security & professor of Animal Science,
Queens University, Belfast.

'Meeting the challenges post-Brexit Britain'

Professor Scollan will consider the opportunities for farming and tomorrow's generation during this time of political change. "There is an urgent need for investment in research to support the further development of sustainable and differentiated beef systems. Effective translation of science and technology into practice will be vital. Knowledge exchange and training to elevate skills in the industry and support further development of a technology driven beef sector in the UK will be key to this."

'Great range of
speakers, excellent
topic selection'

Delegate 2016



The Speakers and Conference Preview

Headline international speakers at this year's conference

Jerry Wulf

Wulf Cattle, Minnesota, USA

'Wulf Cattle markets 50,000 commercial cattle and 650 breeding bulls annually in Minnesota, USA'

Feed efficiency, dressing percent and higher yields are crucial when producing a premium product. Jerry Wulf utilises new technology and techniques to produce the best in his beef cattle supply chain. This is a passion Wulf Cattle has embraced over 50 years in the business of beef production where strategy and genetic improvement is only and always made with the whole beef chain in mind. "The Wulf program is a fully integrated beef producer feeding many customers' calves, tracking them through the packing process and sharing the carcass data with the producer."

Dr Alison Van Eenennaam

University of California, USA

'Gene Editing – the pros and cons and relevance to the Beef Sector'

Having received a Bachelor of Agricultural Science from the University of Melbourne in Australia, an MS in Animal Science, and a PhD in Genetics from UC Davis, Dr Van Eenennaam has given over 400 invited presentations to audiences globally. Frequently providing a credentialed voice on controversial topics including cloning and genetically engineered plants and animals Dr Van Eenennaam will explore gene editing and its relevance to the beef industry in this presentation. Dr Van Eenennaam was the recipient of the 2014 Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST) Borlaug Communication Award, and the 2016 Beef Improvement Association (BIF) Continuing Service Award.

Professor Theo Meuwissen

Norwegian University of Life Sciences

'Awarded the prestigious John Carty Award in 2016 for development of genomic selection'

Professor of bioinformatics at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Theo Meuwissen along with Prof. Mike Goddard from the University of Melbourne were internationally recognised for their work on the development of genomic selection in livestock, plant and human science in 2016. In this session, Professor Meuwissen will be exploring whether we have already exhausted the value of genomic selection in dairy cattle, or whether there are still some hidden treasures to exploit. What strategies should be adopted to keep moving with genomic selection?

David Speller

Applied Poultry, Chesterfield

'Breaking new ground monitoring and controlling technology in poultry facilities around the world'

Farmers Weekly Poultry Farmer of the Year 2009 David Speller had no previous experience in poultry but purchased an existing business in 2004, embraced new technology and re developed the site. Now an additional ten sites around the UK are managed, and assistance is provided to a global network of farmers. Applied Poultry is a partner in the EU Precision Livestock Farming project.

'The international speakers are a great part of the conference and provoke thought and discussion' Delegate 2016



Dr Alison Van Eenennaam
Gene editing – the pros and cons and relevance to the Beef Sector



Theo Meuwissen,
Awarded the prestigious John Carty Award in 2016 for development of genomic selection



The Speakers and Conference Preview



Robert Veitch, Intelligent Automation Driving Production, Health and Welfare

Robert Veitch

Ve-Tech Holsteins, Tarbolton, Ayrshire
'Intelligent Automation Driving Production, Health & Welfare'

A profile of the UK's first fully automated farm exhibiting the latest technology, Robert Veitch was born into a dairy farming family and will give a brief explanation of his background to present day and beyond. He will look at where he was five years ago, where he is now and where he wants to be in the next 5 years. Progressive by nature, Robert will detail how he has harnessed the latest in robotic technology and demonstrate the benefits it has brought him in both production and animal welfare.



Dr Stephen Conroy, Incorporation of Measures of Meat Quality

Dr Stephen Conroy

Manager of Progeny Test Centre, Irish Cattle Breeding Federation, Co Kildare, Ireland
'Incorporation of Measures of Meat Quality in to Beef Breeding Goals: What is the Future and Why is it important?'

Meat quality is becoming more important as consumers worldwide are increasingly demanding consistently higher quality meat. The ICBF has collected sensory panel and shear force phenotypes relating to tenderness, juiciness and flavour producing heritabilities for these traits as well as examining between-breed differences. This presentation will introduce the approach taken in this study and detail the industry outcomes to date.



Vicky Hicks, Mid-infrared analysis of milk; opportunities for new breeding traits

Vicky Hicks

Product Manager, National Milk Records (NMR), Chippenham
'Mid-infrared analysis of milk; opportunities for new breeding traits'

New breeding traits covering fatty acids, energy balance and efficiency are obtainable via an innovative application of existing mid-infrared technology. EBV's and heritability's for such traits will be available to show what genetic progress can be achieved and what impact this could have on health and profitability.



Meilir Jones, Technology on Farm

Meilir Jones

Gop Farm, Flintshire
'Farmers Weekly 'Beef Farmer of the Year' 2015 embraces EID technology'

Meilir Jones, farms 250 acres in Flintshire finishing 1350 store cattle annually. The enterprise uses different technologies to monitor and improve performance and marketing decisions based on the information to create the keenest possible margins. Until recently, the farm has been a Farming Connect demonstration farm, sharing the results of new knowledge and trials with other producers, as well as feeding performance information up and down the supply chain.



'Every talk was interesting and some announced really new developments. Well done!'

The Speakers and Conference Preview

Professor Mark Rutter

Harper Adams University, Shropshire

'Marrying Science to Production: Smart technologies to improve production efficiency and animal welfare'

Professor of Applied Animal Behaviour, at Harper Adams University, Mark Rutter will explain the wide range of sensing technologies that have been developed for the on-farm monitoring of dairy cows. These aim to improve the efficiency of cow management. Many of the early systems focused on oestrus detection but systems are now being used in the early detection of disease. Along with other technologies in development, these have the potential to improve animal welfare as well as production efficiency.

Dave Ross

Chief Executive, The Agri EPI Centre, Easter Bush, Midlothian

'CEO of Agri-EPI Centre Ltd exploring new technologies available to the beef industry'

Agri-EPI Centre Ltd, is one of the new UK Centres of Agricultural Innovation, with a specific focus on Precision technologies and engineered solutions. In recent years Dave Ross has focused on livestock-related technologies and been involved in the research and development of a number of novel and patented developments across the agricultural production sectors. This session will explore what new technologies are out there, why precision agriculture is important and the 'smart farming' solutions that technology currently offers to the UK beef industry.

Tim Gue

Huddlestone Farm, Steyning, West Sussex

'Genomic testing heifers benefits family dairy farm'

Fascinated by the concept of genomic testing, since 2011 Tim Gue has tested all youngstock in his dairy herd allowing rapid genetic progress to be made, and improving the accuracy of matings. The Huddlestone herd consists of 420 cows and is the 15th highest PLI herd in the country with more than 100 cows classified 'Excellent', demonstrating the considerable advancements that have been made. Tim is currently an AHDB Dairy Board member and also sits on the Genetic Advisory Forum.

'Excellent mix of scientists and practical farmers' Delegate 2016



Dave Ross, New Technologies available to the beef industry



Tim Gue, Genomic testing of heifers – vanity or sanity?



The Speakers and Conference Preview



Follow us on
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British Cattle
Breeders Club

The organisation is a unique mixture of farmers, scientists and industry personnel, all dedicated to the advancement of cattle breeding in both the dairy and beef sectors.



New BCBC Website Launched

Our new website was launched in October. Find out more about the club, conference and what the British Cattle Breeders Club is all about at www.cattlebreeders.org.uk

BCBC Out and About

Beef Expo, May 2016

The BCBC also had a presence at Beef Expo, which this year was held at Bakewell in Derbyshire. The prize draw to win two free tickets to the British Cattle Conference beef day proved very popular and the lucky winner was Julia Howard of Ashbourne, while Richard Rhodes, from Lancaster and Roger Egglestone of Congleton, went home with a free BCBC membership for 2016 and 2017.

UK Dairy Day, September 2016

The BCBC stand made an appearance at UK Dairy Day this autumn, where both BCBC members and non-members received a warm reception at the event's Sharing Knowledge zone.

British Cattle Breeders Club Committee

The British Cattle Breeders Club committee is made up of individuals with a wealth of experience in the cattle industry. President, Dr Maurice Bichard, is now retired, having spent his career teaching livestock breeding at university level and becoming involved in research projects. Dr Bichard is a past president of the British Society of Animal Science.

- Chairman of the 2017 British Cattle Conference, Iain Kerr, will be known to many producers as the chief executive of the British Limousin Cattle Society. Brought up on his family's dairy and beef farm in Scotland, Mr Kerr is currently an elected member of the World Limousin Executive and sits on the European Limousin Council.
- The current BCBC vice chairman is Andy Dodd, who will be a familiar face to many dairy farmers. Mr Dodd managed dairy units before taking up his current role as the AHDB technical extension officer of breeding and genetics.
- The Club treasurer is Henry Richardson, who is the data manager and analyst for CDI.

Other Committee Members

- Roger Trehwella – director of Adela Booth Associates and secretary of the World Jersey Cattle Bureau.
- Laurence Loxam – genetics business manager for NMR.
- Dr Kirsty Moore – geneticist, SRUC.
- Dr Duncan Pullar, breed development manager for the Stabiliser Cattle Company.
- Duncan Sinclair – agriculture manager, Waitrose.
- Andy Ryder – secretary to the British Blue Cattle Society.
- Lynette Steel – tenant farmer and retains an interest in her family's pedigree herd.
- Anya Westland – lecturer, Myerscough College.
- Dr Karen Wonnacott – ruminant nutritionist, ForFarmers.
- Richard Park, dairy farmer, Cumbria.
- Charlie Askew – livestock husbandry lecturer, Easton College.
- Stuart Rogers – dairy farmer, Dorset.
- Clive Brown – head of knowledge exchange, AHDB Beef and Lamb.
- Lucy Andrews-Noden – director, Priestcliffe Consulting.



The Speakers and Conference Preview

About the British Cattle Breeders Club

The British Cattle Breeders Club was founded by Sir John Hammond and George Odium in 1947. The first annual conference took place in 1948 and it has grown from these early beginnings, to become an important part of the livestock calendar.

The organisation is a unique mixture of farmers, scientists and industry personnel, all dedicated to the advancement of cattle breeding in both the dairy and beef sectors.

The Club is run by an elected committee, with each member appointed for a period of four years. The committee chairman is an annual appointment and he/she guides the development of the conference, so that each year a different theme evolves. The Club, which is both a charity and a company limited by guarantee, is administered by a secretary.

If you would like to get involved, please contact our secretary, Heidi Bradbury on 07966 032079 or email her at heidi.bradbury@cattlebreeders.org.uk

Feedback Wanted

The BCBC is always open to new ideas and suggestions and we are very keen to receive feedback from both members and non-members. We would like to hear your views on any issues connected with cattle production and, of course, any suggestions you might have on how our organisation can improve its service to members. Please let our secretary, Heidi Bradbury, have your feedback via email to: heidi.bradbury@cattlebreeders.org.uk or by telephoning Heidi on 07966 032079.

BCBC Digests – Back Copies Required

An appeal to British Cattle Breeders Club members – Brian McGuirk is trying to assemble a complete set of BCBC Digests, which he intends to have bound and sent to the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading, for the benefit of future scholars.

Two sets of Digests from the 1980s have already been bound and another three volumes are in preparation. However, Mr McGuirk does not have Digest copies for 1997, 1998 and 2000 and this is holding up completion of the project. The Club is also missing these years and if any members have copies they might be willing to donate, it would be greatly appreciated.

Please contact either Brian McGuirk on (0) 131 447 2795 or email brianmcguirk@hotmail.co.uk or Heidi Bradbury at the BCBC office, 07966 032079 or heidi.bradbury@cattlebreeders.org.uk



Telford Hotel and Golf Resort in Shropshire

Why not join BCBC?

Membership is just £35 per year and offers the following benefits:

- Discounted delegate fees at the annual 2.5 day British Cattle Conference
- Access to the last 60 years of conference papers
- The chance to participate in farm walks
- A copy of the quarterly magazine, Cattle Breeder, with topical articles and information
- A copy of the Digest (the proceedings of the BCC)

Membership of the British Cattle Breeders Club also offers unique networking opportunities, with the chance to meet up with like-minded people involved in all aspects of cattle breeding.

'Speakers at all sessions provoked thought and discussion. I loved the range of topics on offer.'

British Cattle Conference 23-25 January 2017

This year's conference theme is:

'Practical Innovation – Today's Challenges for Tomorrow's Generation'

Monday 23rd January

- 16.00 Beef Workshop
Strategy for Agricultural Technologies – Making it Work
- 19.00 Dinner in the restaurant, followed by quiz at 21.15, with champagne for the winners kindly sponsored by Shepherd Publishing

Tuesday 24th January

- 09.00 Club Chairman Iain Kerr opens the conference
- 09.05 Speaker to be confirmed
- 09.35 Jerry Wulf, Wulf Cattle, Minnesota, USA
Advanced technology in the beef supply chain
- 10.50 Dr Stephen Conroy, ICBF, Co Kildare, Ireland
Incorporation of Measures of Meat Quality in to Beef Breeding Goals: What is the Future and Why is it Important?
- 11.35 David Speller, Applied Poultry, Eastmoor, Chesterfield
Marrying Science to Production
- 12.05 Dr Alison Van Eenennaam, Dept of Animal Science, University of California, USA
Gene Editing – the pros and cons and relevance to the Beef Sector
- 14.00 Parallel Session for Dairy Delegates – Workshop
Feed Efficiency – A new dairy breeding index for 2017
- 14.00 Meilir Jones, Gop Farm, Trelawynd, Flintshire
Technology on Farm
- 14.30 Dave Ross, Chief Executive, The Agri EPI Centre, Easter Bush, Midlothian
Smart Farming – What will it bring to UK Beef?
- 15.30 Forging the Future in Post Brexit Britain – Panel of 3 speakers, including Prof. Nigel Scollan Director of Institute for Global Security at Queens University Belfast & George Lyon, Independent Director AHDB from the Isle of Bute, with discussion.
- 17.00 Chairman closes the day
- 17.15 AGM

Tuesday evening

- 19.15 Champagne Reception kindly sponsored by Shearwell Data followed by the Annual Club dinner with beef kindly donated by Waitrose and Dovecote Park Ltd

Our evening speaker is Alastair Sneddon MRICS FAAV FLAA, 'Observations gained from 40 years of Livestock Auctioneering'

Wednesday 25th January

- 09.05 Mark Berrisford-Smith, Head of Economics for HSBC's commercial banking business in the UK
What Brexit means for business – understanding the effect of the UK's vote to leave the EU
- 09.50 Jim Dickinson, Longley Farm, Holmfirth
Adapting breeding decisions to suit
- 10.50 Prof. Mark Rutter, Professor of Applied Animal Behaviour, Harper Adams University, Shropshire
Marrying Science to Production: Smart technologies to improve production efficiency and animal welfare
- 11.20 Robert Veitch, Strandhead Farm, Tarbolton, Ayrshire
Intelligent Automation Driving Production, Health and Welfare
- 11.50 Dairy PhD Student presentation, selected by AHDB Dairy
- 13.45 Prof. Theo Meuwissen, Department of Animal and Aquacultural Sciences, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Norway
Dairy Genomics is well established – have we exhausted its value or are there still some hidden treasures to exploit?
- 14.30 Tim Gue, Huddleston Farm, Steyning, West Sussex
Genomic testing heifers, vanity or sanity?
- 15.00 Vicky Hicks, NMR, Fox Talbot House, Chippenham
Mid-Infrared analysis of milk; opportunities for new breeding traits
- 15.30 Conference Closes

The full British Cattle Conference programme and on-line booking will be available from early November at www.cattlebreeders.org.uk, follow us @CattleBreeders #BCBC17 like on facebook British Cattle Breeders Club

Day Delegate rates to attend the conference start from £145, plus a 20% discount available off the delegate fee when you join BCBC for just £35

The full British Cattle Conference programme and on-line booking will be available from early November at www.cattlebreeders.org.uk, follow us @CattleBreeders #BCBC17 like on facebook British Cattle Breeders Club