

## **Points arising during the Central Mastitis Review Group meeting held on 21 May 2008**

### **National milk quality statistics**

The extremes in somatic cell count performance of NMR recorded herds are worrying. Since 2005, there has been an upward trend in the proportion of herds recording an average herd cell count >400,000 cells/ml. NML bulk milk cell count data are also worrying; there is a wide gap between the best 25% of herds and the worst 25% of herds.

The GB average cell counts for February and March this year are higher than for the same months last year. It was noted that the Group predicted an increase in national cell count at its last meeting.

It appears that a number of producers are very complacent about their herd cell count; they are happy provided that their bulk milk cell count remains below 400,000 cells/ml.

### **Mastitis surveillance data**

Subclinical *Streptococcus uberis* mastitis appears to be an increasingly important problem in Northern Ireland.

### **Cell count ring trials**

All four British laboratories which carry out cell counting for payment purposes participated in the November 2007 IDF international ring trial on somatic cell counting.

### **Research**

The International Conference on Mastitis Control 2008: From Science to Practice, which will be held from 30 September to 2 October in The Hague, the Netherlands, will hopefully provide an excellent overview of current mastitis research being carried out in a wide range of different areas.

### **Therapy and Prevention**

Cluster backflushing equipment is currently being heavily promoted to producers and many are purchasing this equipment. It was reported that research has shown that although this equipment can significantly decrease bacterial numbers on liners, its impact on bulk milk quality is less significant. Producers need to look closely at the direct benefits on milk quality from installing such equipment and consider the financial benefits in the light of the capital cost of the equipment.

Mastitis in dairy cows is one of the priorities of the England Cattle Health and Welfare Group. The ECHAWG intends to support DairyCo in rolling out a new

programme for mastitis reduction with a target of 20% reduction in recorded mastitis cases on certain farms.

### **British Mastitis Conference**

The British Mastitis Conference 2008 will be held on 8th October 2008 at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire.

### **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 19 November 2008.