

## **PREVENTATIVE APPROACH UNDERPINS HIGH HEALTH STATUS**

For Powys milk producer Robert Pryce-Jones, taking a proactive and preventative approach to herd health is top priority.

This means being aware of all the threats through diagnostic testing, maintaining the highest levels of biosecurity, and sticking to vaccination protocols that ensure maximum protection for the highest risk periods.

It is a strategy that is helping to keep disease and treatment costs in the 200-cow herd to a minimum, but - as Robert is quick to point out - there remains no room for complacency at any level.

“Despite everything that we are doing, the reality is that we are only ever containing the disease threats,” he explains. “It is important to remain vigilant and to ensure all the vaccines are applied correctly at the right times.”

The Holstein Friesian herd at Buttington Old Hall, Welshpool, maintains an impressive 10,100 litres of milk sold per cow per year, at 4.29% butterfat and 3.15% protein, with all replacements reared on the farm to calve at two years of age. The preventative healthcare approach starts with ensuring all newborn calves receive 2½ litres of their own dam’s colostrum within six hours, to supplement suckled milk, and continues by heading off the pneumonia threat with vaccination at a suitably early stage.

Thereafter, the list of potential challenges is a long one, but by working strategically with Geoff Lloyd of Camlas Farm Vets, and sticking rigorously to an annual vaccination calendar, the system is working.

“It’s important to identify the threats and use the best preventative measures available at the right time,” says Geoff.

“For example, we ensure the replacement heifers are vaccinated with MSD Animal Health’s Bovilis BVD as yearlings, well before their service age, so they are protected before they are in calf. Where possible, we combine the Bovilis BVD and Bovilis IBR Marker Live boosters in a single syringe, to reduce handling and save time.

“Vaccination against bovine leptospirosis is carried out with Leptavoid-H, as this protects against both UK strains of the disease. It is always done in the spring, before turnout, as the threat is greatest as stock go out to grass.”

The policy of providing cover against all the main infectious cattle diseases is consistent with the scale of the threat. This is backed up with on-going diagnostics, a closed-herd policy, and double-fencing against all neighbouring farms.



*Strict adherence to herd vaccination protocols is the key to containing disease threats, say Robert Pryce Jones (left) and his vet Geoff Lloyd.*