



## Dairy Pre-Farm Gate PGP Quarter 4, 2011/12 (April - June 2012)

### Executive Summary

Overall, the programme is progressing well and delivering the planned outputs.

#### *1. Theme 1 – On Farm Innovation and Research*

This theme is progressing well against its aims to increase productive potential, resource use efficiency and product value behind the farm gate.

**Significant progress is being made analysing phenotypic data to provide facial eczema and lameness breeding values.** Genetic analyses of the phenotype-testing database for Facial Eczema (FE) tolerance have identified significant variation between current young bulls for breeding value (BV) and tolerance to facial eczema. CRV-Ambreed is partnered with DairyNZ in this work and is now selling FE tolerant bulls so that farmers can breed replacement heifers using bulls that have above average tolerance to facial eczema. This allows those farmers to breed cows that will become more tolerant when exposed to facial eczema spores.

Information on the heritability of lameness and its associated costs available from a South Island study have provided a more complete dataset on this subject, which includes specific lameness phenotypes. The work has been extended evaluate the relationship between breeding worth and the lameness BV and the impact on lameness of production level. The results are very promising.

**Progress has been made in the Dairy Industry Database Network:** A move to industry good stewardship is a core requirement for the development of the Dairy Data Network. During 2011-12, the negotiation for transitioning the core database into industry good stewardship continued to be the focus. A Heads of Agreement, negotiated between DairyNZ and Livestock Improvement Corporation (LIC), signed in May was a key milestone. This means that LIC has made a commitment to move the core database into an industry good entity, thus moving forward the establishment of the Dairy Industry Good Animal Database (DIGAD).

#### *2. Theme 2 – Building Capability for a Sustainable Future*

Progress is continuing by providing greater access to the knowledge and training to progress farm decision making.

**A Whole Farm Approach (WFA) incorporating developments across the pre-farm gate PGP programme is progressing.** The WFA has completed the first draft of the minimum knowledge requirements, training programmes and accreditation proposals for both assessment (Whole Farm Gap Assessment) and planning (Farm Biz Plan) using a farm systems approach. This is significant because it provides a basis for consultation with key participants and for piloting with a trial group of consultants from seven key farm management consultancy firms based throughout New Zealand. The first pilot training day



has been undertaken on the Whole Farm Gap Assessment that they will be piloting with farmers for DairyNZ. Ultimately it is envisaged that the programme will underpin on-going improvements across the industry.

**The Farmer Wellness and Wellbeing programme is supporting farmer capacity.** This programme is providing a multi-agency approach in assisting members of the dairy workforce to improve their health and wellbeing so that they can meet the future dairy industry needs and requirements.

The first stage of research and delivery of PitStops are progressing. The Health PitStops provide farmers with an assessment of their physical and emotional wellbeing at conferences and other farmer events to trigger a participant's recognition of any health concerns. In this second year 620 dairy farmers have had physical checks, and 295 have had emotional wellness health checks. Year-one farmers who participated in the physical check and who were identified as being at risk were also followed up to see if they had made steps to address any health issues. The review indicated that 119 out of a total of 171 farmers contacted have taken a positive step in making health management changes by either visiting their doctor or making a health related lifestyle change.

**The OneFarm website is launched:** The 'OneFarm – Centre of Excellence in Farm Business Management' website has been successfully launched ahead of schedule (OneFarm.ac.nz):

- New content is being regularly uploaded, and website functionality is improving on a daily basis. This will be a continual improvement process;
- The webinar series is being produced, as is a regular 'OneFarm blog' from the team;
- The branding process as part of 'creating a corporate culture' is well underway – we are currently working on branding guidelines, publicity guidelines, producing templates and business cards, promotional material and setting up OneFarm email addresses.

The website will be the central platform from which to connect research, rural professionals and the wider dairy farm business management community. It will provide a powerful tool to deliver professional development modules, highlight past, current and future research, and also provoke discussion and gain input and insight from the community – encouraging their engagement and ensuring that what the Centre is producing truly meets the needs of those in the industry.