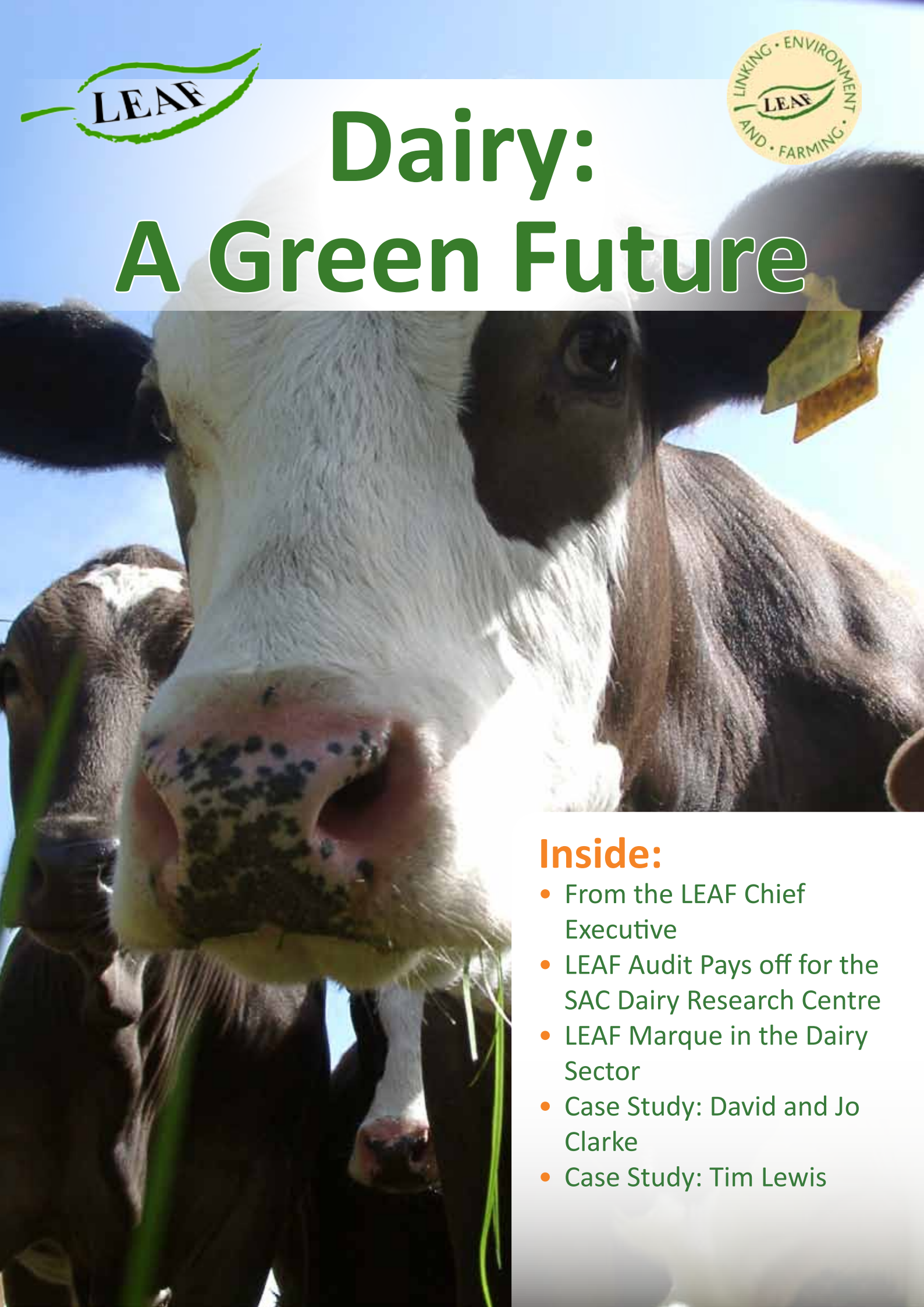




Dairy: A Green Future



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Dairy: A Green Future

We've been working with many partners in the dairy industry for a number of years and now, with discussions on where the industry will be in 2020. Amidst all the talk on milk prices and adding value we need to look to the future of dairy farming and it's implications for sustainability.



From the LEAF Chief Executive

Integrated Farm Management is a farming system that is so fitting for the dairy industry. A logical, practical approach that provides the framework for dairy farmers to create increased profits alongside environmental protection from efficient use of resources.

Whether looking at diagnostics for disease risk and identification, water management, calibration of equipment and machinery, targeting of fertilisers and organic manures to reduce waste or assessing more general management efficiency, LEAF works to help dairy farmers and managers identify what is working well and address any weaknesses.

LEAF's management tools help farmers look at the finer detail, so critical in the dairy sector, making it easier to comply with assurance schemes, prepare your business for meeting the NVZ requirements, or opening the door to new opportunities, through the LEAF Marque.

We hope that you will enjoy reading through this special supplement and joining us at one of our LEAF Demonstration Farms and events over the coming year – and if you are not already a member, we hope to welcome you soon, as we strengthen our activities and offer for dairy farmers.

The LEAF Audit Pays Off for the SAC Dairy Research Centre



Dr David Roberts, Head of SAC's Dairy Research Centre in Dumfries, explains the role of the LEAF Audit in helping to manage resources wisely.

Integrated Farm Management (IFM) often seems to me to be stating the obvious – make best use of the resources you have and do not waste them, since wastage leads to lower financial returns and increased environmental impact. It is, however, often difficult to identify which areas within the farm require attention.

There are a number of possible approaches to identify these areas including benchmarking, carbon foot printing and the LEAF Audit. Of these, the LEAF Audit is most useful since it takes a whole farm approach.

For example, this year's LEAF Audit at SAC Crichton Royal Farm, identified that we had slipped in our communication with farm staff about our business aims and the day-to-day approach to meet these. This would not have been identified in a standard benchmarking exercise. Equally importantly, the LEAF Audit identified our strengths in terms of nutrient use but that we needed to pay more attention to soil management.

IFM and the LEAF Audit will develop over the years and much of the research being undertaken at SAC will contribute to this.

These include the reduction in

greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Much of our research is focussed on identifying ways to reduce the amount of



methane a cow produces per litre of milk produced by estimating differences between strains of cattle and feeding systems.

However, nitrous oxide is an even more potent GHG than methane and is produced from grassland after fertiliser applications. Reducing these emissions will mean that more of the nitrogen applied is available to the grass crop which leads to improved efficiency of grass growth and reduced costs.

Soil is crucially important as the basis for most, if not all, farming systems and we will be focusing our research more closely on the effects of compaction, with a new research partnership funded by DairyCo.

David Roberts is Scottish LEAF Chairman and sits on the LEAF Board. For more information about the SAC Dairy Research Centre, go to www.sac.ac.uk/research/groups/sls/teams/drc/



The LEAF Audit: Benefiting Your Business

Only available to LEAF members and included in your membership fee, the LEAF Audit provides a comprehensive health check of the farm and gives benchmarks and action plans to focus the business for the year ahead, saving you time and money.

LEAF Marque in the Dairy Sector

Mark Robins, Chairman, Marks & Spencer National Milk Pool Chairman



The LEAF Marque has a lot to offer dairy farmers

Dairy farming is a tough, relentless job which requires day-to-day commitment from those working on the farm with little time for a break, let alone time to reflect on where their business or dairy enterprise is going or why.

In dairying in particular, it is very easy to become a 'busy fool', tied to the cows and their need for daily routine without stopping to take stock.

The LEAF Audit offers you the chance to do just that: take stock. It gives the dairy farmer a usable template to review his business to discover what is being done well and uncover what deserves attention and improvement.

The LEAF Marque is a food label consumers and the food industry trusts.

As our consumers become more remote and distant from understanding how their food is produced, it is increasingly important to offer them reassurance that what we are doing is done with passion, is right and proper and something we do with pride.

LEAF has been championing the benefits of Integrated Farm Management for 20 years now. Traditionally viewed as an organisation exclusively for arable or produce growers, it has been working hard to encourage livestock producers to get more involved. I urge you to do so.

[CASE STUDY] David and Jo Clarke, LEAF Marque Cheese Producers



The Clarks have been farming in Leicestershire for generations, with their own 70 hectare dairy farm. Most of the feed is grown on the farm and calving takes place all year round to ensure a consistent supply of milk. Diversifying into cheese making in 2005, half their milk is now used to make 50 tonnes of cheese, including Sparkenhoe Red Leicester, Bosworth Field and Battlefield Blue, which is all LEAF Marque certified.

"We became members of LEAF five years ago. LEAF's promotion of a balanced, whole farming approach fitted exactly with our own views. We like the self-assessment approach of the LEAF Audit as it allows us to make our own decisions that best fit our farm, its location and our business priorities. We've seen a number of financial benefits from our membership, particularly through doing the LEAF Audit and gaining LEAF Marque accreditation.

We were already supplying our Leicestershire handmade cheese to Waitrose but we hope that having the LEAF Marque will help us secure our contract in the future. We also sell our cheese directly to customers at local markets and shows, having

the LEAF Marque gives us a unique selling point. In fact, we were the first cheese producers in the country to become LEAF Marque certified!

Doing the LEAF Audit helps keep us abreast of new developments. Attending LEAF training and demonstration events with my staff helps them understand what direction I am taking the farm."

To find out more about David and Jo Clarke and what they get out of their LEAF membership look out for their stand-alone case study leaflet.

Are you a member of LEAF?

Join online today and start to build your business www.leafuk.org



[CASE STUDY] Tim Lewis, Dairy Farmer for a Sustainable Future

Tim and his father took over the tenancy of the farm in 2000. They run a 150 cow dairy herd, bred with Limousins and Belgian Blue as well as a beef herd. Time is divided between the farm, contract farming, partner cultivating and lifting sugar beet. A full time herdsman manages the dairy farm and a general farm worker helps the arable enterprise.

Financially Sustainable

One of the biggest benefits of LEAF membership is the LEAF Audit, which has encouraged us to view manure as a valuable nutrient bank, instead of a waste product. We now invest a lot of time targeting our applications to where they are needed most, which has resulted in considerable savings in our fertiliser costs. We now think more about pest threshold levels and only spray if there are very good reasons to do so. This has environmental benefits and, again, led to some significant cost savings.

Environmentally Friendly

Farming with environmental care, whilst ensuring a profitable farming business is what LEAF and its IFM principles are all about. As a farmer, I need practical management tools to help me to do this, that don't cost a fortune, aren't going to take up all my time, are easy to use and work! LEAF membership has definitely made me more aware of the environmental impact of our farming practices.

Socially Active

I want to do everything I can to help people - be they supermarket buyers or the general public - make the vital link between the food they buy, how it is produced and how much they pay for it. The support I receive from LEAF to help me host great farm visits and increase my confidence has been invaluable. Welcoming people onto the farm, through events like Open Farm Sunday and showing them what I do and why, will help contribute to a more secure future in farming for my children.

Why LEAF?

I love farming. It's a fantastic way of life and I feel hugely privileged to do what I do. I want my children to have a future in farming and to pass on a profitable business working hand in hand with nature. Being a member of LEAF gives me the support I need to achieve this.



“ It takes everyone time to adjust to new environmental regulations, but being a member of LEAF and doing the Audit, gives me more time to acclimatise. ”

*You, like Tim, can benefit from being a LEAF member. From as little as **£60 per year** you can start to save money, keep up with regulation and have the tools you need to farm in a financially, environmentally and socially sustainable way. Join online at www.leafuk.org*

Already a member? Using our suite of tools, services and events is the key to getting the most from your membership - the LEAF Audit, Demonstration Farms, Speak Out, Technical events and the Green Box are all designed to help your business thrive. Have you completed your 2011 LEAF Audit?

Join LEAF today

TECHNICAL EVENTS • DEMONSTRATION FARMS • SPEAK OUT • LEAF MARQUE •
LEAF AUDIT • GREEN BOX

Go to www.leafuk.org and join online!