



Secretary's Report 2018

Over the past year two significant factors having an influence on the dairy industry have been increased demand for butterfat, plus greater expectation from consumers and legislators that livestock farming should have a lower environmental impact. The Jersey breed is extremely well placed to fulfil both these demands. Across North America the response has been quite stunning, in particular; and our breed is making a wider contribution everywhere from the challenging climatic conditions of Sub-Saharan Africa to the heights of the Chinese Himalayan region ... and all points in between.

Business is rarely a one-way street and the big swings of milk price result in a challenging economic platform. In the UK, at least, volatility is now described by industry economists as the 'new norm.' Their expectation is from trough, through peak, and back to trough in just three years. The only good point – if there is one – is that this cycle is not aligned globally. There is a lag between continents which affords some respite and hope for others that better times will come. This is resulting in herd consolidation, although a recent report from the USA indicates that managing these swings is not all about size. The report informs that, in percentage terms, a greater number of large herds exited the industry than was the case in other herd size bands.

The insecurity around milk price does, though, appear to be affecting attendance at Bureau meetings. After two exceptional years of participation, the 2018 International Conference had fewer participants than may have been hoped for.

The Conference saw a change of Officer team and we thank the following for their contributions: Derrick Frigot, President and now Patron; Agustin Robredo, Vice-President Latin America; Anders Levring, Vice-President Europe; Steve Le Feuvre, Treasurer and now President. Other new Officer appointments included Benoit Guioullier, Vice-President Europe and Jacobo Cabassa, Vice-President Latin America.

Initial analysis of attendance in the 2015 to 2017 period indicates a positive response to the drop-in / drop-out mini breaks, offered by host nations during these years. Geography plays an important part in being able to provide such opportunities, especially attractive for those with limited time or back-up cover on the farm. Council requested a review of the Memorandum of Association between the Bureau and host nations to encourage short-break inclusion.

The effect of the European Jersey Forum was also significant in the higher attendance years, and it is with great pleasure that the Bureau welcomes the formation of the Latin American Jersey Forum. To date the relationship between the Bureau and the European Jersey Forum has been informal. It is now time to develop, jointly, a more regularised relationship with such groupings. The format has more to offer, potentially across Africa and in Asia. In all cases the development needs to be bespoke, and not a 'one size fits all' approach.

Since the inception of genomic testing, geneticists have been trumpeting the mantra that 'it's all about the genes and not the breed.' At the same time, it is widely accepted that many

phenotypic outcomes are the result of a combination of genes, with further impact from specific environmental factors.

Clearly our best defence, from which to promote the breed, is through female genotyping. Only then will we have the knowledge to breed with maximum efficiency. It is interesting to note that some herd owners are already focusing on specific traits, for example polling or A2:A2.

This leads to the final area in which the Bureau can act as a conduit for information exchange. Closing the loop around milk marketing. There are a number of significant businesses, worldwide, which market Jersey milk and dairy products at a premium; on top of which there are research based results which confirm the enhanced product quality and over-and-above volumes achieved from Jersey milk's compositional quality; and our breed has more than its fair share of producer-processors drawing on the marketing image of the Jersey.

The Bureau continues to sponsor the Award for the Best Jersey Cheese at the World Cheese Awards, and has added to this support for our products through an advertisement in the 2018 Good Cheese Guide.

Respectfully submitted.

Roger Trehella, Secretary