

## Using health plans on organic farms II: a dairy farm

**Case study:** Roger and Moira Ridgway, Clovers Farm, Letterston, Haverfordwest  
75 cow, organic dairy herd

Roger and Moira Ridgway farm 75 cross bred dairy cows on 120 acres near the village of Letterston in Pembrokeshire. The farm has been fully organic since 2003, has year round calving, a stocking rate of approximately 2 LU/ha, produces 5600 litres/cow/year of milk sold, from 1 tonne of cake/cow/year and has been a closed herd for the past 8-9 years

The Ridgway's began animal health planning in 1997 and the process has remained relatively unchanged over this period. It involves two key aspects; the health management strategy for general and specific aspects of health developed with the aid of a vet; and the recording of health data to monitor the health planning process. The management strategy is reviewed annually and data recording and evaluation is a continuous process. Data recorded includes: fertility problems, mastitis, digestive disorders, hypomagnesaemia, milk fever, ketosis, lameness and other occasional health problems. For lameness and mastitis more detailed data is recorded, including cow identity, type of lameness or mastitis, leg or quarter infected and the treatment given to the animal. All treatments given to the dairy herd or young stock (including homeopathy) are recorded. The Ridgway's use a computer programme "Herd Diary" from Luxsoft to record the health data - this makes accessing historical data and comparing health records from year to year relatively simple.

### Mastitis and SCC

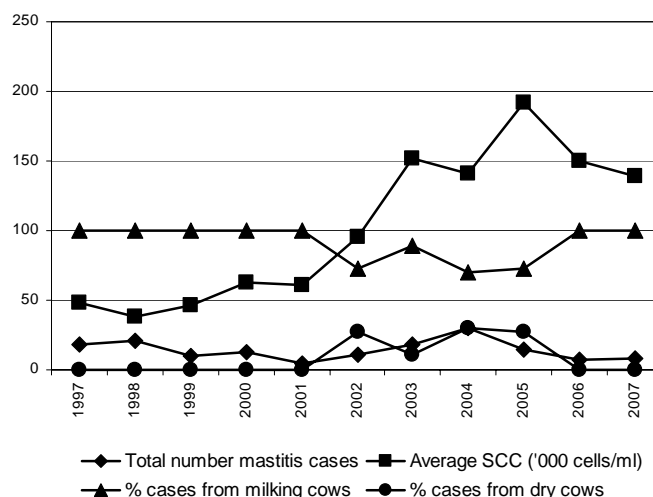
Mastitis and SCC data are presented in Figure 1. Prior to 2001 and conversion to organic, routine dry cow therapy was used in the Clovers herd, result in very low somatic cell counts (50-60,000 cells/ml) and no dry cow mastitis. During the conversion the number of cases of dry cow mastitis increased significantly due to the removal of dry cow therapy. Dryflex (external teat sealant) was used from the start of conversion until July 2004 when an outbreak of mastitis occurred and Orbeseal was introduced instead on the recommendation of the vet. The combination of Orbeseal, homeopathic remedies, improved hygiene in the milking parlour (using gloves, dipping clusters between cows in peracetic acid solution), adjustments to the milking machine and the use of antibiotics where necessary mean that there is little mastitis in the herd (no dry cow mastitis) at all. In 2007 only 3 cows were treated with antibiotics for mastitis, 6 treated with homeopathy and SCC was running at an average 139,000 cells/ml. Swedish Red genetics have been introduced into the herd to try and reduce somatic cell count (a characteristic of the breed) but this has ceased now as the conformation of the cows was moving

away from the desired short and stocky to taller, thinner cows.

### General herd health

The Ridgway's firmly believe that nutrition plays a key part in maintaining herd health. Since conversion they have moved from clamp silage to unchopped bale silage which has a much higher pH and greater nutritional quality. The milking cows strip graze a forage rape crop from December to March, this not only provides valuable feed but allows cows access to the outdoors and exercise throughout the housing period. Dry cows are fed arable silage with a high straw content which helps reduce the incidence of milk fever. Young stock are reared on ad-lib yoghurt milk (up to 10 L/calf/day) and whilst this is relatively expensive, it has achieved good growth rates and healthy calves with no incidence of scouring.

Figure 1. Mastitis and SCC data from Clovers Farm



### Conclusion

By recording and monitoring herd health status, regularly updating their health management plan, providing good nutrition, strict milking and parlour hygiene practices, using cross bred animals for hybrid vigour and having a closed herd policy, the Ridgway's have achieved both very high levels of animal health and minimised the input of veterinary medicines.

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## Defnyddio cynlluniau iechyd ar ffermydd organig II: fferm laeth organig

**Astudiaeth achos:** Roger a Moira Ridgway, Clovers Farm, Treletert, Hwlffordd  
Gyr o 75 o wartheg llaeth organig

Mae Roger a Moira Ridgway yn ffermio 75 o wartheg llaeth croesfrid ar 120 o erwau ger pentref Treletert yn Sir Benfro. Mae'r fferm yn gwbl organig ers 2003, yn lloia drwy'r flwyddyn gron, yn meddu ar gyfradd stocio o oddeutu 2 Uned Fyw yr hectar, yn cynhyrchu 5,600 litr o laeth a werthir fesul fuwch/y flwyddyn – a hynny o 1 dunnell o gêc y fuwch/y flwyddyn, ac y mae wedi bod yn yrr caeedig am yr 8-9 mlynedd ddiwethaf.

Dechreuodd Roger a Moira Ridgway gynllunio iechyd anifeiliaid yn 1997, ac mae'r proses wedi aros yn gymharol ddigyfnwid dros y cyfnod hwn. Mae iddo ddwy ran allweddol sef, yn gyntaf, y strategaeth rheoli iechyd ar gyfer agweddau cyffredinol a phenodol ar iechyd anifeiliaid gyda chymorth milfeddyg ac, yn ail, cofnodi data iechyd er mwyn monitro'r proses cynllunio iechyd. Adolygir y strategaeth reoli bob blwyddyn, ac mae cofnodi a gwerthuso data yn broses parhaus. Mae'r data a gofnodir yn cynnwys: problemau ffrwythlondeb, mastitis, anhwylderau traul, y ddera, y dwymyn laeth, cetosis, cloffni, a phroblemau iechyd achlysurol eraill. Cedwir cofnodion manylach yng nghyswllt cloffni a mastitis, gan gynnwys pa fuwch sy'n dioddef, y math o gloffni neu fastitis, y goes neu'r chwarthor a heintiwyd, a'r driniaeth a roddir i'r anifail. Cofnodir pob triniaeth a roddir i'r gyr godro neu stoc ifanc (gan gynnwys homeopathi). Mae'r teulu yn defnyddio rhaglen gyfrifiadurol "Herd Diary" gan Luxsoft i gofnodi data iechyd - y mae hyn yn ei gwneud yn rhwydd i gael gafael ar ddata o flynyddoedd blaenorol ac i gymharu cofnodion iechyd o flwyddyn i flwyddyn.

### Mastitis a Chyfrifiad Celloedd Somatig (CCS)

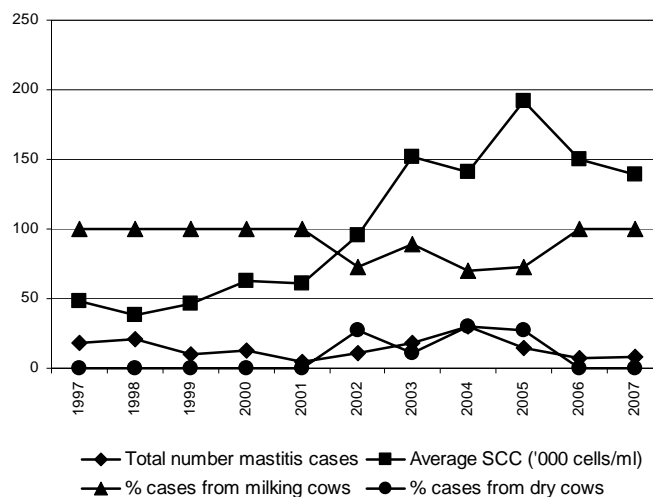
Rhoddir data ar fastitis ac CCS yn Ffigwr 1. Cyn newid i system organig yn 2001, defnyddid therapi buwch hesb fel rhan o'r drefn arferol ac, o ganlyniad, ceid CCS isel iawn (50-60,000 celloedd/ml) a dim un achos o fastitis buwch hesb. Yn ystod y trosglwyddo, cynyddai'r achosion o fastitis 'buwch hesb' yn sylweddol, ar ôl rhoi'r gorau i ddefnyddio therapi buwch hesb. Defnyddiwyd *Dryflex* (seliwr tethi allanol) o ddechrau'r trosglwyddo hyd fis Gorffennaf 2004 pan dorrodd mastitis allan ymhlith y gyr a phryd yr awgrymodd y milfeddyg y dylid defnyddio *Orbeseal* yn ei le. Mae cyfuniad o ddefnyddio *Orbeseal*, meddyginiaethau homeopathig, gwell hylendid yn y parlwr godro (defnyddio menig, trochi clystyrau mewn toddiant asid perasetig rhwng y gwartheg), addasiadau i'r peiriant godro, a defnyddio gwrthfotigau pan fo raid, wedi golygu nad oes nemor ddim achosion o fastitis (a dim mastitis buwch hesb) yn y gyr. Yn 2007, dim ond 3 buwch a gafodd driniaeth wrthfotig at fastitis tra cafodd 6 arall driniaeth homeopathig. Ar gyfartaledd, ceid CCS o 139,000 celloedd/ml. Cyflwynwyd genynnau 'Swedish Red' i'r gyr er mwyn ceisio lleihau'r cyfrifiad celloedd somatig (sy'n nodweddiadol o'r brid) ni wneir hynny

erbyn hyn gan fod y genynnau'n dechrau golygu bod y gwartheg yn mynd yn dalach a theneuach – yn lle'r gwartheg byr a cydnerth roeddent am eu cael.

### Iechyd cyffredinol y gyr

Mae'r teulu yn credu'n gryf fod maeth yn chwarae rhan allweddol o ran cynnal iechyd y gyr. Ers trosglwyddo, y maent wedi cefnu ar silwair clamp ac wedi troi at silwair bêls heb ei dorri sydd â pH uwch o lawer ac yn well o ran maeth. O fis Rhagfyr i fis Mawrth, mae'r gwartheg godro yn pori ar gnwd rêp - y mae hyn nid yn unig yn rhoi iddynt borthiant maethlon, ond hefyd yn rhoi ymarfer corff iddynt yn yr awyr agored drwy gydol y cyfnod dan do. Bwydynt gwartheg hysb ar silwair â'r gyda chyfran uchel o wellt sy'n helpu i leihau achosion o'r dwymyn laeth. Megir stoc ifanc ar laeth iogwrt *ad-lib* (hyd at 10 litr y llo/y dydd) ac, er bod hyn yn gymharol ddrud, y mae'n rhoi cyfraddau twf da a lloia iach heb yr un achos o'r ysgôth.

Ffigwr 1. Data am fastitis a CCS o Clovers Farm



### Casgliad

Drwy gofnodi a monitro statws iechyd y gyr, diweddarau eu cynllun rheoli iechyd yn rheolaidd, darparu porthiant da, mabwysiadu arferion hylendid da yn y parlwr godro, defnyddio anifeiliaid croesfrid i sicrhau gwytnwch croesryw, a thrwy bolisi gyr caeedig, mae Roger a Moira Ridgway wedi llwyddo i sicrhau bod eu hanifeiliaid yn iach a'u bod yn llai dibynnol ar foddion milfeddygol.

Canolfan Organig Cymru · Astudiaethau Achos Cynllunio Iechyd · Chwefror 2008