

# MPO Newsletter / Nuusbriëf

1 April 2011

## All milk producers benefit from Large Herds Conference

The South African Large Herds Conference is aimed at progressive milk producers of all sizes who are serious about the business aspects of farming. Presentations on new technology, environmental issues, finances and tax and human resource management are included in the programme. This year, the conference takes place from 6 to 8 June at The Regent Hotel in East London. Milk producers are urged not to miss this opportunity for exposure to internationally acclaimed dairy experts, academics and scientists. Read more about the conference, including the full programme details, in the April issue of *The Dairy Mail*. The deadline for registration is currently 30 April and is strictly on a first come first served basis. Producers who are interested in attending the conference are urged to register as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. Register now by following this <[link](#)>.

## Feedback on FMD outbreak

Following the declaration of the official foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) infected zone and the setting up of 14 roadblocks around the infected area, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) stated that a feedlot in Gauteng was put under quarantine after investigation revealed that animals were moved there from Vryheid in KwaZulu-Natal. Samples were also collected from the said feedlot and came back positive on serology, but no fragments of the virus could be found, which implies that it is an old infection with no virus present. DAFF has now embarked on a campaign to vaccinate 25 000 animals, the largest number ever in history. Dr Nico Schutte of the MPO's Cendel advises livestock farmers to be extremely vigilant and put their own farm quarantine measures in place, such as controlling the entry of people and animals, and disinfecting tyres and shoes. Farmers must also draw up a practical and effective bio-security programme in consultation with their private veterinarians. For a copy of DAFF's full report on the FMD outbreak, <[click here](#)>.

## French company acquires major share in Parmalat

The French dairy company Lactalis acquired a 29% share in Parmalat SpA last week. This prompted the Italian government to consider means of making government approval a condition for take-overs of Italian companies which are considered as strategic. Lactalis is now the largest shareholder in Parmalat SpA and enjoys an influential position ahead of the shareholder meeting in April at

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which the board of directors will be elected. Lactalis' recommendations in this regard excludes current Parmalat CEO Enrico Bondi. In the meantime Italian confectionary company Ferrero SpA expressed interest in a potential investment in Parmalat SpA. <[Click here](#)> to read more.

### **Government serious about performance testing**

Dr ME Mogajane, deputy director general at DAFF, opened the consultative meeting held between the livestock industry, Government and the Agricultural Research Council in Pretoria last week and introduced the facilitators, Professors Johan van Rooyen and Frans Swanepoel. Various participants gave a broad outline of the present situation with regard to their participation in the National Animal Recording and Improvement Schemes and expectations for the future. A SWOT analysis was done under leadership of the facilitators and a subcommittee was appointed to continue with strategy implementation. Dr Nico Schutte, who represented the MPO at the meeting, said that the continuation of a well structured performance testing scheme is of critical importance for milk producers and it is encouraging that government also views it as a priority.

### **MPO to assist Lesotho dairy industry**

Mr Koos Pienaar, Chairman MPO Free State, Mr Bertus de Jongh, MPO CEO, and Ms Veronica Marais, regional coordinator, met with representatives of the Lesotho dairy industry in Maseru on 25 March. The Lesotho dairy industry asked the MPO to assist them in establishing an organisation similar to the MPO to represent the country's milk producers. During the discussions it became clear that milk producers in Lesotho experience the same challenges as their South African counterparts, namely low producer prices paid by milk buyers and limited bargaining power. The MPO was also asked to present a 'training the trainer' programme to 15 dairy extension officers. Mr Bertus de Jongh said that healthy dairy industries in the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) member states is important for continued low levels of imports into the SACU region and to maintain the Union's common external import tariffs.

### **Cooperation between livestock producers and veterinary profession**

A meeting between veterinarians and representatives of livestock producers took place at the Gariep Dam on Friday, 25 March. The main purpose of the meeting was to promote better cooperation between farmers and veterinarians. It was decided to resuscitate the Animal Health Forum in order to facilitate communication between livestock industries, the veterinary profession and government. Further areas for cooperation were identified and will be addressed in future. The meeting was attended by Dr Koos Coetzee, MPO economist, as well as Dr Mpho Maja, director, animal health from DAFF, who provided information on the current



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status of the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak. Grave concern was expressed regarding Government's role in preventing and controlling animal disease outbreaks. According to Dr Coetzee, it is important for farmers to ensure that their own bio-security protocols are in place to protect their herds against disease. Agri SA issued a press release on 29 March confirming the organisation's support for a forum between the veterinary services of the national as well as provincial departments of Agriculture and livestock organisations which could look at infrastructure requirements and the services needed to practice animal production effectively in full compliance with international health standards.

### **MPO projects discussed at Milk SA general meeting**

A general meeting of Milk SA was held on 29 March 2011 at which, among others, the MPO reported on its various projects, which include training, industry information and mentorship programmes. Dr Koos Coetzee made a presentation on the current economic status of the dairy industry and feedback was given on the generic advertising campaign.

### **Implications of Consumer Protection Act for dairy industry**

A legal expert, Mr Janusz Luterek, specialising in, among others, the Consumer Protection Act, this week presented a document summarising the implications of the Act for the dairy industry at a meeting held between representatives of the primary and secondary dairy industries. Mr Bertus de Jongh said that the Act, which is in force from today, will definitely impact on milk producers and it is therefore important that they familiarise themselves with the contents. The document compiled by Mr Luterek is available on the MPO's website and can be accessed by following this <[link](#)>.

### **Milk producer killed in accident**

Mr Richard van den Heever, a 33-year old milk producer from Senekal in the Free State, was tragically shocked to death in his milking parlour on Monday evening. The MPO expresses sincere condolences to Mr van den Heever's wife, two young children and family.

### **Interview with Parmalat's new head**

Louise Cooke, Parmalat's new director and chief executive officer in an interview with *The Dairy Mail* said: "We are in the business of providing high quality products from great brands that all consumers can buy with confidence and are available where they shop." Read the whole interview with the first woman to head a dairy processing company in South Africa in the April edition of *The Dairy Mail*.

### **Important dates**

- **MPO roadshow meetings:**
  - **North** - Contact Alta van Zyl at 012 843 5615 or [alta@mpo.co.za](mailto:alta@mpo.co.za)



Monday, 11 April, 10:00 – De Oude Werf, Bronkhorstspuit  
Tuesday, 12 April, 10:00 – Farm of Hannes Lombard, Morgenzon  
Tuesday, 12 April, 14:00 – Farm of Hein Aucamp, Ermelo  
Wednesday, 13 April, 10:00 – Krugersdorp – details to be confirmed  
Wednesday, 13 April, 14:00 – Oude Bosch (Wiesenhof), Heidelberg  
Thursday, 14 April, 11:00 – ALZU Farm, Middelburg

- **Large Herds conference**, 6 to 8 June 2010, The Regent hotel, East London. To avoid disappointment please contact Julie McLachlan at 012 998 6616 or 083 740 2720 or send an e-mail to [julie.mclachlan6@gmail.com](mailto:julie.mclachlan6@gmail.com) or [julie@cendel.co.za](mailto:julie@cendel.co.za). <[Click here](#)> for a direct link to the official website.
- **Dairy farm managers' course**, 12 to 14 July in Caledon. This course will be presented in Afrikaans. Please contact Julie McLachlan at 083 740 2720 or send an email to [julie@cendel.co.za](mailto:julie@cendel.co.za) for programme information and a registration form.

#### Links

**[Milk Producers' Organisation – The Dairy Mail](#)**

#### Contact us

**[Bertus de Jongh](#)** – Chief executive officer

**[Barbara Bieldt](#)** – Manager: Market protection and development

**[Dr Koos Coetzee](#)** – Economist

**[Philip Swart](#)** – MPO member services



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