

**SUMMER
2026**

CRV **Forward**

Magazine for a healthy and efficient herd

**Pole position
with polled
genetics**

**Herd report
Troutbeck
Ayrshires**



BETTER COWS > BETTER LIFE



Dear reader,

Innovation in dairy farming is not about chasing the next trend – it is about making breeding decisions today that create healthier, more efficient and more profitable herds for tomorrow. At CRV, we are committed to providing genetics and knowledge that help dairy farmers meet the challenges of a rapidly changing industry.

In this edition, we are proud to introduce several exciting new sires that combine outstanding production with functional traits, fertility and longevity. We are also proud to showcase how CRV is in pole position with our polled genetics. With an industry-leading portfolio of polled sires, we continue to offer dairy farmers more breeding choices that combine genetic progress with practical herd management benefits.

Technology and management go hand in hand with genetics. With Nedap Now we demonstrate how data and technology can provide valuable insights to support everyday management decisions.

The future of every dairy herd starts with its youngest animals. In our article on calf rearing, we discuss the importance of giving calves the best possible start, ensuring they develop into productive, healthy and long-lasting cows.

Finally, we visit a progressive red-and-white dairy farm in the UK where CRV genetics play a central role in building a profitable and sustainable herd. Their story demonstrates that successful breeding is about finding the right balance between production, health, efficiency and longevity. Whether you are searching for the next generation of elite genetics, looking to improve herd performance or simply interested in the latest developments in dairy breeding, we hope this magazine provides valuable insights and practical inspiration.

Miranda van Zessen-Wiltink
Regional Sales Manager CRV

Imprint

CRV Forward is a publication of CRV UK and is published three times a year.

Address

Head office CRV United Kingdom
Suite 15
Davies House Business Centre
4 Lowndes Road
Stourbridge
West Midlands
DY8 3SS

Telephone: 01562 861582
Email: info@crv4all.co.uk

Editing, design and layout CRV Publishing

Photography CRV and Alger Meekma

Printer Stephens & George Print Group

Material appearing in CRV Forward is protected by copyright and may not be reproduced without prior permission from CRV.

Cover photo These black beauties (s. Eloy and Wirdum) are enjoying the fresh pasture (photo: Eric Elbers).

Want to stay up to date on all the successes of CRV genetics? Follow us on our social networks Facebook and Instagram

CRV, leading
in health and efficiency



FACEBOOK



INSTAGRAM

Lol family keeps delivering

Delta Cordial is the latest addition to the successful Lol family. The black-and-white Sterling son originates from the same cow family as Delta Launch PP.

The Dutch Lol cow family has demonstrated for generations that it possesses superior genetics. Daughter-proven sons such as Delta Launch PP and Delta Emoji P confirm the qualities they already showed as genomic sires: strong feet and legs and generally high components.

The youngest member of the family, the black-and-white Delta Cordial, is also performing at the highest level. He transmits almost 1,900 kg of milk with positive components. His daughters are expected to score above average for persistency (breeding value 111) and to develop strongly across lactations (late maturity index 106). Combined with high scores for longevity (+814) and feed efficiency (109), this results in a +17% score for CRV Efficiency.

Cordial also excels in health traits, including 107 for hoof health, 105 for udder health and 104 for fertility. In his

type proof (total score 108), he stands out particularly for locomotion (106), fore udder attachment (107) and udder depth (108).

Easy-to-manage cows

The foundation cow behind Cordial's cow family is Caudumer Lol 422 PP. CRV purchased the red-and-white polled Handy P daughter as a calf from the Haytema family in Koudum. Cows from the Lol family have performed consistently well for generations, says Sietse Henk Haytema. "The Lols are easy-to-manage cows that produce a lot of milk with high components. The herd is mainly grass-based, which suits the Lol family very well."

Caudumer Lol 422 developed into a true super-donor, producing not only Delta Launch PP and Delta Emoji P, but also Delta Cartoon P and Delta Louis P. So far, she has produced 53,265 kg of

- **High production**
- **High efficiency**
- **Easy calvings**

milk with 4.76% fat and 3.99% protein in five lactations.

Her daughter Delta Levina P is also classified VG85. The Faithful daughter is housed at the CRV test farm of Willem Booij and is among the herd favourites for her strength and late maturity. "She is a powerful cow with an excellent udder and exceptionally high protein levels." In her second lactation she produced 16,251 kg of milk in 383 days with 4.41% fat and 3.96% protein.

A mating of Levina with Eloy RC resulted in the red-and-white sire Delta Firestone, who has recently achieved success as a sire of sons with Delta Solaris. A full sister of Firestone is the dam of Delta Luena VG85, who in turn is the dam of Delta Cordial. His high milk transmission and positive protein levels are no coincidence. Luena produced 13,101 kg of milk with 3.81% fat and 3.70% protein in 290 days in her first lactation. Luena is also housed at Willem Booij's farm. "Luena is extremely persistent. She is four and a half months in calf and still producing 50 litres after more than 300 days in milk. Like her dam and granddam, she produces high protein levels and has a good udder."

Transform daughter Delta Luena, dam to Delta Cordial



For more information
about CRV bulls
check our website

“Breeding the cow we want”

A blend of Ayrshire and red-and-white Holstein genetics is helping the Mattinson family build the kind of herd they want: functional, efficient cows that can stay productive for many years.

She is undoubtedly the favourite cow in the herd. Fourteen-year-old Troutbeck Burdette Jess 3 EX96 has produced more than 140,000 kg of milk and is now carrying her thirteenth calf. “She has been an incredible cow,” says James Mattinson. “And in all those years, we have only used 13 straws to get her in calf. That is basically one service per lactation.”

Jess has already left her mark on the herd. Her Webmail daughter is classified Excellent 95, while her youngest calf is a promising Party P daughter. She has also produced several sons, including Troutbeck Progress (s. Famous), who has been used extensively within the Mattinson herd.

Jess is a good example of what the Mattinson family is aiming to breed: cows with functional type that are medium-sized, robust, sound on their feet and legs, and, above all, capable of lasting.

Functional type and moderate size

Earlier this spring, the Mattinson family’s farm near Wigton in Cumbria was one of the herds visited during the annual conference of the Ayrshire Cattle Society. Frank Mattinson and his twin sons James and Philip run a herd of around 650 cattle, including youngstock, with 330 cows currently in milk. The herd combines Ayrshire and Red-Holstein

The herd combines Ayrshire and Red-Holstein genetics





Company information

Farm name	Troutbeck Ayrshires
Owners	Frank, James and Philip Mattinson
Location	Wigton, Cumbria
Herd size	330 milking cows
Average yield	9,700 4.7 3.4
Land use	500 acres (including maize)



The family uses sexed semen on their best cows

genetics. “Cows with a Holstein percent of 51 percent don’t go in the official Ayrshire herdbook, but into a British red and white herd book,” explains James. “But we are not afraid to use Red Holstein bulls. We simply try to breed the cow we want.”

That means a cow with functional type, moderate size, strength and good feet and legs – and one that will stay in the herd for many years. “Jess is a perfect example of that.” Milk solids are another important part of the breeding goal. The farm supplies Arla under a contract that pays on kilograms of fat and protein. The herd currently averages 9,700 kg of milk at 4.7% fat and 3.4% protein. The cows are milked twice a day through a Fullwood 36/36 parlour.

More than 25 years CRV sires

The Mattinsons have been using CRV sires for more than 25 years. Current sires being used include their own Troutbeck Progress, alongside Red Holstein sires such as Koepon Real Life, Lowlands Solaris, Delta Ted Talk PP and Delta Party P. “The fact that some of these bulls are polled is an added benefit,” says James.

The family uses sexed semen on their best cows, while Belgian Blue bulls from CRV are used on the other cows. Aberdeen Angus bulls are used on the heifers. “We get considerably more money for the beef-on-dairy calves than we would for pure Holstein or Ayrshire bull calves.”

The herd also includes several daughters of Drouner Altitude and Delta Steam PP. “We are very pleased with these heifers with an average conformation score of 84.

We also do some showing, and in 2021 we had the national champion with Troutbeck Skyfall Peony Rose EX95.”

For now, the Mattinsons are not genomically testing their herd. James expects that to change in the future. “We will get there in time, when the Ayrshire breed has a more reliable genomic base.”

More milk from forage

Improving efficiency is an important part of the family’s plans. Although the Mattinsons have no ambition to increase herd size over the next few years, they do want to improve profitability and make better use of home-grown feed. “We want to become more profitable and efficient, and we would like to produce more milk from forage,” says James. “That is one of the reasons we are interested in the efficiency figures published by CRV.”

Ten years ago, the family moved to a new site, where they built a purpose-designed greenfield facility for the cows. Feeding is now carried out by a robotic Triolet feeder. “That has definitely helped to improve our feed efficiency. The cows are eating more forage and less concentrate now.” During the summer, the cows are housed overnight and graze during the day. During the winter, the herd is divided into several groups, including high and low producers and fresh cows. The ration consists of grass and maize silage, fodder beet, brewers’ grains and a blend. The robotic feeder delivers feed up to ten times a day. “We are keen to embrace new technology if it can help us improve the herd.”

On pole position for polled genetics

Polled genetics are rapidly gaining ground in the dairy industry. More and more dairy producers are choosing polled sires. CRV is responding with a breeding programme in which polled genetics account for an increasing share.

Fifteen years ago, breeding for polledness was still largely the domain of pioneers. Today, the landscape is changing quickly. Dehorning calves is increasingly under discussion. This is driven by growing societal concern for animal welfare, the desire to reduce labour and costs, and rising regulatory pressure. A Dutch ban on dehorning is expected by 2040. Calves born polled do not require dehorning. This reduces stress at an early age, improves calf welfare from birth and offers practical benefits in terms of labour and cost for the farmer. CRV therefore sees polledness as an integral part of breeding for the future. The trait has been included in its breeding programmes since 2008, starting with the use of the red-and-white sire Lawn Boy.

Polled sires were later used on top donors such as Etazon Renate to significantly improve the genetic merit of polled animals. This strategy has proven highly successful. The popular sire Delta Drone PP, for example, traces back to Etazon Renate through daughters of Esperanto, Meteor, Maddock P and Magna P.

Strong progress

In recent years, CRV has made substantial progress in polled genetics within the European Holstein breeding programme. Around half of the animals in the Delta nucleus in Wirdum are now genetically polled.

Polled genetics across breeds

For farmers interested in polled breeding, the choice is not limited to Holstein sires. CRV also offers polled sires in other breeds, including Jersey, Fleckvieh and Belgian Blue. In the online catalogue, farmers can filter by breed. Within each breed, they can then select specifically for PP or P sires.

Dairy farmers are also increasingly using polled sires. In the Netherlands, more than 40% of inseminations in the red-and-white Holstein population last year involved polled sires, according to CRV figures.

According to CRV's breeding team, this is only the beginning. With the expected ban on dehorning in the Netherlands by 2040, the proportion of polled sires in the breeding programme will continue to increase.

"We are moving towards nearly 100% homozygous polled sires in the red-and-white Holstein programme. For black-and-white, our goal is to reach around 80% PP sires by 2040," says Jaap Veldhuisen, manager product development genetics.

CRV deliberately chooses not to rely exclusively on polled sires. By 2040, polled genetics will already be widespread in the population. As a result, many farmers will have homozygous polled (PP) animals in their herds. These can be safely mated with horned sires, as all offspring will still be born polled.

Growth without compromising genetic merit

The increase in the proportion of polled sires has not come at the expense of genetic merit or diversity. Polled animals originate from a broad range of sire lines and cow families, explains Marcel Fox, coordinator of the Delta nucleus programme. "Preventing inbreeding has always been a key focus. That allows us to continue scaling up without narrowing the genetic base."

In addition, CRV does not compromise on other important breeding goals, such as production, health, conformation and efficiency. "Polledness is not a standalone trait, but an integral part of our broader genetic strategy," Veldhuisen adds.

At present, CRV has a wide range of polled sires available, such as the red-and-white sires Delta Ratings PP, Delta High Tide PP and Delta Primetime PP. Within the black-and-white population CRV offers also Jeans Hummer PP.



How is polledness inherited?

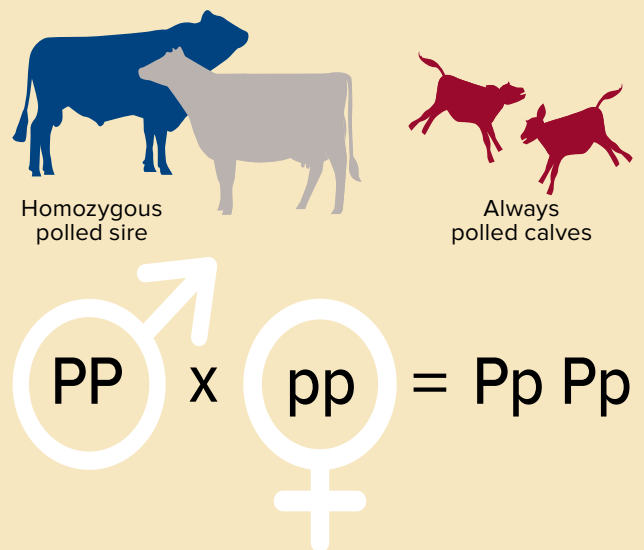
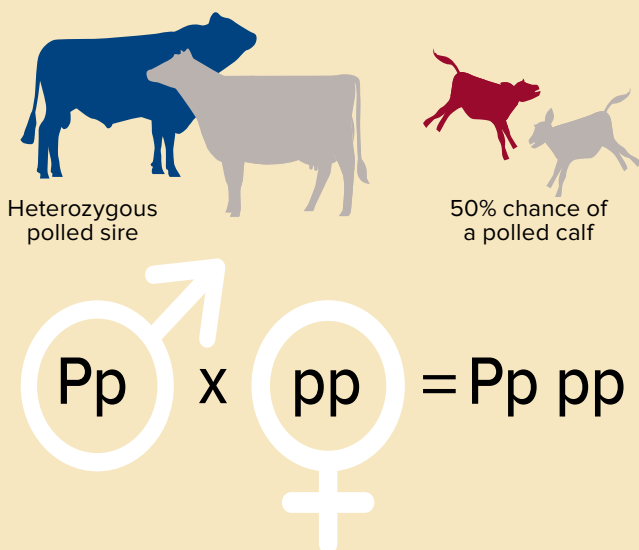
The inheritance of polledness is relatively straightforward. The trait is controlled by a single gene that is inherited dominantly. The genetic factor for polledness is indicated by the capital letter P, derived from the English word polled. Animals can be homozygous polled (PP), heterozygous polled (Pp or simply P), or horned (pp).

"The advantage of polledness is that a single copy of the P allele is already sufficient to produce a polled animal",

explains Vera van Engeland, breeding program data analyst at CRV. "Because the polled gene is dominant, targeted matings allow for relatively fast progress both in the breeding programme and on farm."

A homozygous polled sire, such as Delta Ted Talk PP, always passes on the polled trait. All offspring will be born polled, even when mated to horned cows. A heterozygous polled sire produces on average 50 percent polled offspring.

Polledness is dominant



An extra pair of eyes

More and more dairy farmers are using Ovalert to monitor their cows around the clock. Since this year, producers can switch to a new Ovalert platform with additional features. The new system, Nedap Now, has moved to the cloud and now also provides heat stress alerts.

As dairy farms continue to grow, farmers are dealing with increasing amounts of data and limited time. Monitoring systems such as Ovalert help simplify herd management by supporting heat detection and identifying cows with reduced feed intake or abnormal behaviour.

The Ovalert system continues to evolve. Since this year, dairy farmers have the opportunity to switch to the new Nedap Now platform. In the old system (Velos), data are stored and accessed locally. Nedap Now operates in the cloud. This means that data are continuously processed and available online. As a result, farmers can access information anytime and anywhere, both on a computer and on a smartphone. If no internet connection is available, heat and health data still remain visible locally.

Beyond alerts

One of the main improvements of Nedap Now is that the system goes beyond simply generating alerts. It also adds

Farmers can create customised work lists



Switching to Nedap Now?

Farmers wishing to switch from Velos to Nedap Now need a Nedap VP8002 and a stable internet connection. The system can be used free of charge for one month. If farmers are not satisfied, they can switch back to the old system without losing monitoring data. Cloud service costs are £ 0.15 per active responder per month.

context. Each cow receives a health score and trend based on her behaviour during the previous 24 hours, compared with both her own normal pattern and that of herd mates. Farmers can therefore see not only that something is wrong, but also how serious the issue may be and whether treatment is having an effect.

The platform also offers more detailed fertility monitoring. It accounts for differences in heat intensity and duration, helping farmers identify the optimal insemination moment. Cows receive an individual heat score, while the herd-level 'cycling rate' shows the percentage of cows returning to heat during the voluntary waiting period after calving. In addition, Nedap Now visualises daily behavioural patterns such as feeding, rumination and resting activity. In practice, the platform functions as an extra pair of eyes. Farmers can also create customised work lists alongside the standard task lists, allowing them to focus on the areas most relevant to their farm.

Detecting heat stress

Another important innovation is the system's ability to detect heat stress. During warm periods, heat stress can strongly affect feed intake, milk production and fertility. Nedap Now continuously monitors heat stress at group level and classifies conditions into four categories: none, mild, severe and very severe. The status is updated automatically every 15 minutes.

New bulls fortify portfolio

A number of new sires have recently joined the CRV lineup. CRV Forward presents them briefly.

Koepon Real Life-Red • CRV Health +6% • CRV Efficiency +13%

“Cows that produce milk effortlessly from strength, move freely, and combine style with functionality.” This is how herd manager Alex Borst characterizes the Doma family at Koepon Holsteins. His description also applies to Koepon Ranger Doma 58 VG85, the dam of Koepon Real Life (Reality x OH Ranger). In her second lactation, she is projected to produce nearly 14,000 kg of milk with 4.13% fat and 3.46% protein in 305 days. “Animals from this family often have high genomic breeding values, and they also prove that genetic potential in practice – they milk extremely hard,” Borst explains. The Doma family traces back to the

excellent American brood and show cow Scientific Debutante Rae, and further in the pedigree to the ‘Queen of the Breed’, Glenridge Citation Roxy (EX97).

Koepon Real Life reflects the trademark traits of the cow family in his genomic profile: strength, capacity, and rib structure. In addition, with nearly 1,700 kg milk, and 126 kg fat and protein, he is an outstanding production sire.

The functional udders of the Real Life daughters are expected to be firmly attached in the fore udder and high and wide in the rear udder.

Real Life has a breeding value of 106 for feed efficiency and transmits A2A2



- Different sire stack
- Good health traits
- High longevity

beta-casein. With +6% CRV Health, he also performs strongly for health traits across the board, including 108 hoof health and 103 daughter fertility.

Delta Brussels PP • CRV Health +5% • CRV Efficiency +6%

Delta Brussels PP, a red-and-white homozygous polled sire, proves with his highly complete proof profile that breeding for polled genetics in 2026 certainly does not have to come at the expense of genetic progress for other important traits. He transmits more than 1,100 kg milk with +0.21% protein. Brussels PP combines this high production potential with 466 days of productive life, and breeding value of 104 for daughter fertility and 106 for hoof health.

Daughters of Brussels PP will develop into strong cows with plenty of width throughout the front end and very good feet and legs (106).

The breeding values of Brussels PP show he is an ideal sire for farmers with robotic milking systems. He improves milking speed and, with breeding values of 96 for front teat placement and 94 for rear teat placement, he is also an excellent corrective sire for closely placed teats. Robot-milking dairy farmer Hans Boschloo recognises many of the qualities of Brussels PP in his dam, Delta Thelisa. She was classified as a heifer with 86 points for overall conformation, including 87 points for feet and legs. “She is the ideal cow for the robot,” the farmer explains. “Attachment is perfect and a milking



- High milking speed
- Adds strength
- Easy calvings

takes no longer than five minutes.” As a heifer, Thelisa produced 10,571 kg milk with 4.85% fat and 3.80% protein.



Colostrum lays foundation for a good dairy cow

The right sire selection, the right mating. Both are essential to breed a good dairy cow. But the importance of calf rearing should not be underestimated either, says Jinke Oosterhof of Denkavit. “If a young calf does not receive proper care, it will never develop into a good dairy cow later in life.”

From South America to Spain, and from the United Kingdom to Scandinavia. Jinke Oosterhof, product manager at Denkavit, travels the world advising farmers on calf rearing. Asked why proper calf rearing is so important, she does not hesitate. “You may have an excellent heifer calf genetically, but without sufficient attention to calf rearing, it will never become a good dairy cow.”

Good calf rearing starts with the timely administration of colostrum. “A calf is born without antibodies, so it has to obtain them from colostrum”, Oosterhof explains. “The earlier colostrum is fed, the greater the absorption capacity for antibodies. Shortly after birth, the calf’s intestines are still open to absorbing these antibodies. The longer you wait, the fewer antibodies the calf will absorb.”

First colostrum as soon as possible

Colostrum also provides the calf with an energy boost, says Oosterhof. “And if a calf is cold immediately after

birth, warm colostrum helps raise its body temperature.” Denkavit developed a protocol for colostrum management (see box). “That protocol is the gold standard,” says Oosterhof. One of the recommendations is that calves should ideally receive their first colostrum feeding as soon as possible after birth, and certainly within two hours. The amount of colostrum required depends on the concentration of antibodies – expressed as immunoglobulins – in the colostrum. “A refractometer or Brix meter is virtually indispensable. It allows farmers to easily measure the antibody concentration in colostrum,” she explains. An average calf should receive 200 grams of IgG at the first feeding. With a Brix value of 23 percent, this corresponds to 2.9 litres of colostrum (see figure 1). Although it requires more labour, bottle feeding is clearly preferred over tube feeding. “With a bottle, calves have to suckle. This activates the oesophageal groove reflex, ensuring that the milk flows directly into the abomasum rather than the rumen. Another

advantage of teat feeding is that calves are usually standing in the correct position, with their head raised.”

During the first 24 hours after birth, a calf should receive at least 400 grams of IgG. Oosterhof also recommends feeding colostrum or transition milk on days two and three after birth before switching to milk replacer. “Apart from antibodies, colostrum contains many other beneficial components for the calf.”

Colostrum from own dam

Ideally, calves should receive colostrum from their own dam. “Or at least colostrum from the same farm. Every farm has its own microbiome and its own specific challenges. Colostrum from the home farm is best adapted to those conditions.”

Hygiene during colostrum collection and storage is equally important, Oosterhof stresses. “Disinfect the teats before milking and wear gloves,” she advises. “This minimises bacterial contamination of the colostrum. Feed the colostrum immediately after collection or store it in the refrigerator.”

After the colostrum period, Oosterhof recommends introducing calf starter concentrate and hay or straw at an early stage. “A young calf is born as a monogastric animal,

but it needs to become a ruminant. That is why it is a good idea to offer concentrate and hay or straw from the first week onwards. During the first five weeks calves obtain most of their energy from milk, but early exposure helps them adapt and stimulates rumen development.”

How much colostrum does a calf need at the first feeding?

An average calf should receive at least 200 grams of IgG at the first feeding and 400 grams within 24 hours after birth. Based on the Brix value the required volume of colostrum can be calculated. For example, colostrum with a Brix value of 23 percent contains 68 grams of IgG per litre. To provide at least 200 grams of IgG, the calf therefore needs 2.9 litres of colostrum at the first feeding.

Figure 1: Minimum colostrum volume in relation to Brix value of the colostrum

Brix value (%)	IgG content in colostrum (g/l)	minimum volume of colostrum (l)
12	6	use higher-quality colostrum
13	12	
14	17	
15	23	
16	29	
17	34	
18	40	5.0
19	46	4.4
20	51	3.9
21	57	3.5
22	63	3.2
23	68	2.9
24	74	2.7
25	80	2.5
26	85	2.4
27	91	2.2
28	97	2.1
29	102	2.0
30	108	1.9

 insufficient	 good
 moderate	 excellent
 reasonable	

Nine-step colostrum protocol

1. Ensure that the cow's teats and milking equipment are disinfected before milking
2. Milk the cow out completely as soon as possible after calving
3. Collect the colostrum hygienically to keep bacterial counts as low as possible
4. Check colostrum quality using a refractometer (Brix meter)
5. Use the table to determine the minimum volume of colostrum required for the calf's first feeding
6. Feed the colostrum to the calf as quickly as possible
7. Store leftover colostrum in the refrigerator for the next feeding
8. Ensure the calf receives colostrum at least three times during the first day
9. Feed colostrum or transition milk on days two and three after birth

CRV UK



Milking robot index

Selecting the right bulls for an automatic milking system has never been easier. The CRV Milking Robot Index gives dairy farmers clear guidance in choosing bulls that are best suited for robotic milking.

Select bulls with a high CRV Milking Robot Index to breed cows that adapt faster to robotic milking, visit the robot more consistently, produce more fat and protein per robot per day, and maintain excellent udder health.

The index combines the following breeding values to maximize labour efficiency and profitability:

- **Milking Robot Efficiency**
- **Milking Robot Interval**
- **Milking Robot Habituation**
- **Udder Health**

