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T H WHITE Dairy manager Nigel Ellis (right) explains the operation of the remarkable DeLaval OptiDuo to farmer David Merrett.

First OptiDuo in UK heralds new DeLaval dairy innovations

The first DeLaval OptiDuo™ in the UK has been supplied by dairy specialists T H WHITE and commissioned at Oldbury Farm near Frampton on Severn, Gloucestershire, where David Merrett has a herd of 125 cows.

The OptiDuo™ is a new robotic feed pusher with a twin-spiralled rotating auger which allows feed to be remixed and repositioned without damaging or crushing the roughage and then pushes it closer to the feeding rail, giving the cows constant access to the refreshed feed.

Following a guidance cable buried in the yard surface, the OptiDuo can be programmed to work around the clock, meaning that cows have access to feed 24 hours a day. This allows heifers and lower ranked cows the same opportunity to feed, with less stress and competition, as dominant cows in the herd which in turn leads to higher intakes, resulting in more milk in the tank. Different settings can be made for different groups, for example lactating cow feed or young-stock feed.

DeLaval calculates that with the OptiDuo feed intake can be increased by up to 10 per cent with less wastage, providing the cows with a well-mixed diet to help to ensure maximum dry matter intake and minimise feed sorting. The cows can then spend more time resting and ruminating. OptiDuo has been designed with simple maintenance in mind. There are few parts that need to be changed, and no requirement for greasing.

David Merrett adopted a zero-grazing policy for his cows two years ago with fresh grass being harvested on a rotation of about three weeks from March to October and brought in daily to the cows. So far, replacing feed with fresh grass has saved about a ton of concentrate per animal every year. “The arrival of the DeLaval OptiDuo means that the cows not only have a plentiful supply of grass, but that it’s always freshly turned and pushed towards the feeding rail without any farm labour being needed,” he said.

T H WHITE Dairy Manager Nigel Ellis had recommended the OptiDuo to David Merrett. “I knew that David’s cows were going to benefit from this,” said David. “They are already feeding more which is reflected in the milk yield and we were proud to supply the first OptiDuo in the UK.”

David is enthusiastic about new technologies and seven years ago installed two DeLaval Voluntary Milking System (VMS) units, which have revolutionised the way he runs his business.

Now, DeLaval has introduced the new VMS V300 incorporating a host of improvements that will enable farmers to do more with less. At the heart of the system is the milking arm – which in many ways replicates actions of the human arm. New software and the highest ever quality camera assess the best and most accurate way to attach the teat cups. The system learns and adapts to each individual udder, memorising the settings and resulting in attachment rates of 99.8 per cent, taking away the need to teach the machine manually with the entry of each new cow.



Attachment of teat cups is 50 percent faster than the previous model, milking capacity is up by 10 percent to a potential 3,500kg of milk a day, yet running costs are lower. The integrated DeLaval InSight™ system is able to find the teat fast and accurately, giving the cow a stress-free and relaxed experience.

Another major advance is in teat spraying. The V300 is fitted with the DeLaval PureFlow™ system which cleans each teat individually with a 99 percent teat spray hit rate. Increased stimulation from the PureFlow system also results in a 15 percent higher milk flow. A new user interface – the DeLaval InControl™ mobile app – allows for remote control of the system as well as access to information.

The DeLaval OptiDuo and V300 voluntary milking system are just two of several new technological innovations from the market leader in dairy automation that will maximise milk yield, herd health and profitability. For all the details of the latest developments or more information on OptiDuo or the VMS V300, call Nigel Ellis on 01373 465941, or email nigel.ellis@thwhite.co.uk.

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Note to Editors: High resolution images are available from Kate Draper, 01380 722381, kld@thwhite.co.uk

About T H WHITE:

The T H WHITE Dairy team has been helping customers get the best from innovation and technology for generations. They now provide dairy farmers with everything from large and small-scale milking parlours, cooling and storage systems, to accessories, parts and consumables, all backed by high-class service and maintenance. The resources available within the T H WHITE Group enable complete turnkey projects to be delivered, encompassing design, building construction, equipment installation and commissioning. Throughout the process our focus is on service, which brings trust, experience and professionalism to every project.

Founded in 1832, T H WHITE Group is a family and staff owned company which supplies and maintains equipment in multiple sectors including groundcare, construction, lorry cranes, dairy and agriculture.

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