

Industry-leading undergraduate Dairy Engineering qualification results from joint initiative

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*In front of the impressive Lackham House at the heart of the Wiltshire College campus, some of the people from Lackham and T H WHITE who have worked on the joint dairy initiative. **Left to right:** Adrian Ford, Amy Colderick, Nigel Ellis, Rob Wheeler, Bob Gallop, Chris Newey, Alex Scott, Amanda Burnside, Mike Howes, Iain Hatt, Andy Hill, Philip Steans, Venetia Summers.*

T H WHITE has joined forces with Wiltshire College & University Centre to create a state-of-the-art robotic dairy parlour supporting the development of a dedicated undergraduate Dairy Engineering qualification.

The course, scheduled to begin in September this year, will be based at the College's Lackham Campus near Chippenham where the 1,700-acre site is home to three working farms. The existing 140-cow dairy unit will be augmented with a new robotic milking parlour featuring two of the latest DeLaval VMS V300 robotic milking units, an advanced Bauer slurry control system plus a day/night LED lighting system. The complete project will be controlled by market leading DeLaval software.

Students will be introduced to the remarkable technological advancements that are revolutionising the dairy industry and will be able to study engineering and automation in a real-world environment against a background of business management and animal husbandry. As a full-time two-year course it will lead to a Level 4 BTEC higher qualification (a HND), or part time (HNC). With an entry requirement of a Level 3 qualification in a relevant subject (many of which are already offered at Lackham), the

course will be particularly attractive to 16-18 year olds pursuing a rewarding career path.



Amanda Burnside, Principal of Wiltshire College & University Centre, Lackham, and T H WHITE CEO Alex Scott, signing the historic agreement.

Commenting on the new course, Amanda Burnside, Principal at the College said “We are very proud to have designed and created a dedicated dairy qualification for the sector, aimed at students with a passion for agricultural technology, engineering, science and automation. The new facilities we are building at Lackham, backed by £9 million funding from the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, will be the envy of other farm automation learning providers and

will, no doubt, create an amazing training environment for our students”.

Plans for the partnership between the College, T H WHITE and DeLaval have progressed during 2019 and a formal agreement of the joint cooperation has been signed. The initiative is now only subject to planning consent for which an application has been submitted with a decision expected in March. Work on the site will then be expedited, all efforts being co-ordinated towards the new facility and teaching rooms being ready to open soon after the start of the course in September.

As well as installing the new robotic parlour, T H WHITE will be supporting the course by committing to deliver lecture sessions during the year in which CEO Alex Scott and other senior members of the T H WHITE team will discuss business development and innovation in agriculture, with Head of Dairy Nigel Ellis covering the latest in robotic milking, feeding, fertility and other strategies for increased milk yield.

“We believe this initiative is exactly what is required to address the skills gap in the dairy sector,” said Alex Scott, “and we are delighted to be working in partnership with the College, as well as industry innovator DeLaval to make it happen. The course will lay a pathway to an attractive career combining technology and farming. To expand the range of studies T H WHITE will provide several work experience placements and offer student access to the company’s Frome-based business, from where our expert dairy team operates.”

Ciaran Murphy of DeLaval sees the new course as a great opportunity to attract more technically-minded young people to dairying: “DeLaval pioneered the Voluntary Milking System and today’s robotic arm on the VMS V300 units is quite something to see in action! Not only does it reduce labour requirements, making milking quick and efficient, but it is also comfortable for the cow. Integrating it with our herd navigator software enables constant monitoring of many health and reproductive factors for each animal, resulting in optimum herd management and higher yields.

“By participating in the partnership at Lackham, DeLaval can provide students with the hands-on experience and technical knowledge that will give them a strong career advantage in this fast-changing area of farming,” said Ciaran.

To learn more about the College’s Dairy Engineering Course at Lackham or to apply for a place, go to www.wiltshire.ac.uk. Applications are now open and places for this pioneering course are certain be in high demand!

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About T H WHITE – Project Management, Installation and Aftersales specialist

T H WHITE Dairy is a southern DeLaval dealer providing equipment, service and parts from two branches in Frome (Somerset) and Huntley (Gloucestershire). The specialist Dairy team designs, installs and maintains milking equipment for dairy farmers and services this equipment, 24/7. All engineers are Milking Equipment Association (MEA) trained and work in partnership with DeLaval, continuously innovating solutions to meet customer needs. T H WHITE Dairy also stocks a comprehensive selection of Dairy parts and sundries available for on-farm delivery or collection.

Part of T H WHITE Group, a family and staff owned engineering service provider founded in 1832 specialising in the supply and maintenance of machinery for multiple sectors including agriculture, dairy, groundcare and construction equipment alongside businesses in lorry cranes, grain storage, and fire and security systems. The Group’s focus is on service, which brings trust, experience and professionalism to every customer interaction. For more information please visit: thwhite.co.uk

About DeLaval – Manufacturer

DeLaval is a worldwide leader in milking equipment and solutions for dairy farmers, which make sustainable food production possible, warranting milk quality and animal health. Our solutions are used by millions of dairy farmers around the globe every day.

DeLaval was founded more than 135 years ago in Sweden, when the visionary Gustaf de Laval patented the cream separator. Today, DeLaval has 4,500 employees and operates in more than 100 markets. DeLaval, alongside Tetra Pak and Sidel, is part of the Tetra Laval Group. See more at www.delavalcorporate.com.

About Wiltshire College and University Centre – Learning provider

Based on four main campuses in Trowbridge, Chippenham, Lackham and Salisbury, the college offers a wide range of apprenticeships as well as full-time, part-time and university level courses.