

# EuroDairy farmers exchange UK/NL about reducing antibiotic use on farms

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In October 2016, ten UK dairy farmers flew to the Netherlands to learn more about Dutch dairying and how they've reduced antibiotic use on farms.

The aim of the trip was to share ideas and knowledge, not just on how to reduce antibiotic use but how to farm efficiently and sustainably while enhancing cow health and welfare. The exchange was part of the EuroDairy project, organised by AHDB Dairy in collaboration with the University of Bristol, ZLTO and Zuivel NL in the Netherlands.

The participating farmers, from Somerset and Devon in England and Northern Ireland, were already making changes to how they approached animal health and antibiotics use. The English farmers were also participating in a University of Bristol research project, sponsored by AHDB Dairy, on reducing antimicrobial use.

The UK farmers wanted to know:

- How the Dutch farmers reduced antibiotic use on farm
- How they controlled disease
- What limitations do they have to work within
- What was the role of their vet?
- What are the differences between the two countries

The exchange programme consisted of a day hearing from groups from the Netherlands about the Dutch dairy sector, how they had approached antibiotic use on farm and consequently reduced it on a national basis.

Talks covered collaborating with dedicated vets, monitoring antibiotic usage through a centralised database called MediRund, as well as disease control programmes on Bovine Virus Diarrhoea (BVD) and Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR).

The second day involved three farm visits in different areas of the country to see first-hand how dairy farmers had adapted to reducing antibiotic use. Topics discussed included robotic milkers, differing young stock management systems and novel dry cow protocols.

The final day comprised a trip to Dairy Campus in Leeuwarden. This state-of-the-art facility demonstrated the innovation and science going into dairy farming in the Netherlands. The day wrapped up with a workshop on lessons learnt and what the UK dairy industry can take inspiration from.

As a direct result of this exchange, some UK dairy farmers have been trialling different dry cow protocols on their farms, as well as taking home ideas on measuring antibiotic use, working closer with the vet, cubicle design and installing robotic milkers.



## Research Themes

EuroDairy drives the engine of innovations on 4 main themes at dairy farms: animal care, biodiversity, resource efficiency and socio-economic resilience. Find more info on these dairy topics here!

[Biodiversity](#)

[Resource Efficiency](#)

[Socio-Economics](#)

[Animal Care](#)

[Interactive Innovation](#)



