

NEWS RELEASE



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## **REPORT GIVES STRONG BUSINESS CASE FOR USE OF SEXED SEMEN**

Results of a report released Wednesday (17 September) by the SAC Dairy Research Centre present a strong business case for the use of sexed semen as way to increase farmer's profits.

The new report, *"The efficacy, economics and practicalities of sexed semen as a welfare-friendly herd replacement tool in the dairy industry"* was commissioned by Compassion in World Farming and the RSPCA as part of the Beyond Calf Exports Stakeholder Forum, and comes on the day of the National Dairy Event.

Compassion in World Farming and RSPCA believe that not only does using sexed semen make good business sense, but increased uptake of sexed semen will mean fewer male dairy calves killed on the farm shortly after birth or exported to continental veal systems.

In terms of the UK dairy or beef industry, there is little to suggest any significant problems arising from a switch to sexed semen. On the contrary, the technology would reduce the number of low value male dairy calves and increase the number of more valuable beef cross calves for the beef industry.

Philip Lymbery, Chief Executive of Compassion in World Farming said, "The findings of SAC's report are good news for farmers and good news for the animal welfare lobby. It

is imperative that we find as many viable solutions as possible to the seemingly 'unwanted' male dairy calf. Sexed semen is one such solution and could greatly decrease the numbers of male dairy calves exported or shot at birth."

David Bowles, RSPCA Head of External Affairs said "The report shows the use of sexed semen could be good for farmers, the beef industry and animal welfare and with demand currently outstripping supply shows the potential to use this as one part of the solution."

The report shows that common place negative perceptions of sexed semen are based on out-of-date information. Since the launch of sexed semen for commercial sale technology has improved and companies know more about how to use it effectively.

"It is important to realise that investments are needed in order to increase supply of sexed semen," continues Philip Lymbery.

"The other part of the equation to reduce the number of 'unwanted' calves is to evolve supply chains to ensure that remaining dairy bull calves are reared for beef in higher welfare systems in Britain."

"Beyond Calf Exports stakeholder forum has been gaining great momentum in finding answers to the problem of male dairy calves. Both retailers and farming industries are really working together to join up the supply chain and together overcome this problem."

## **Notes**

**For a copy of the report or to arrange an interview contact Annabel Davis, Compassion in World Farming, on 01483 521973 or [Annabel@ciwf.org](mailto:Annabel@ciwf.org) or Calie Woozley, RSPCA on 0300 123 0490 or [cwoozley@rspca.org.uk](mailto:cwoozley@rspca.org.uk)**

## **Beyond Calf Exports**

The Beyond Calf Exports Stakeholders Forum was convened by the RSPCA and Compassion in World Farming and other leading stakeholders in June 2006. Its aim was to find realistic and economically viable alternatives that would result in a reduction in the number of male dairy calves killed shortly after birth and the number that are exported live to veal farms.

## **Progress to date**

- Excellent progress is being made with six leading retailers (Marks & Spencer, McDonald's, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Waitrose) who are carrying out

projects to increase the rearing of male dairy calves within their supply chains and improve the health and welfare of calves and cows alike.

- The dairy and beef industries are also involved in a wide range of very positive initiatives - Blade Farming announced a new pricing initiative to encourage dairy farmers to rear their male dairy calves rather than shoot them and are also working with breeding companies to promote a 'better' Holstein to farmers and producing British veal for export. EBLEX/Dairy Co have launched [www.holsteinbullcalves.co.uk](http://www.holsteinbullcalves.co.uk) a site reporting on calf rearing options and includes an economic multiplier for rearing options to help farmers decide whether to rear their male dairy calves.

The forum includes representatives from: Assured British Meat, Assured Dairy Farms (ADF), Beef Production Systems Ltd, Blade Farming Ltd, Bristol University, British Friesian Breeders Club, British Cattle Veterinary Association, Centre for Dairy Information (CDI), Cattle Information Service (CIS), Compassion in World Farming, Co-operative Group, Cranfield University, Defra, Dovecote Park Ltd, Dunbia, English Beef and Lamb Executive (EBLEX), Food Animal Initiative (FAI), Freedom Food, Helen Browning Organics, Holstein UK, Marks & Spencer, McDonald's, Milk Development Council (MDC), National Beef Association (NBA), National Farmers' Union (NFU), National Farmers' Union Scotland (NFUS), Organic Milk Suppliers Cooperative (OMSCo), Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers (RABDF), RSPCA, Sainsbury's, Scottish Agricultural College, Soil Association, Southern Counties Fresh Foods, Tesco, Trading Standards Institute (TSI), Waitrose, Westpoint Veterinary Group.