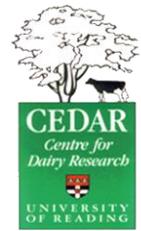


25 YEARS OF CEDAR

Celebrating Sustainable Livestock Research



WHAT IS A LEAF INNOVATION CENTRE?

The organisation LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) works with farmers, the food industry, scientists and consumers, to inspire and enable sustainable farming that enriches the environment and engages local communities.

As part of its activities, LEAF has a number of Innovation Centres that are recognised research institutes whose work provides evidence to support the development and promotion of 'Integrated Farm Management' (IFM): farming working in harmony with the environment.

www.leafuk.org



Caroline Drummond (LEAF CEO) and Alice Midmer (LEAF innovation centre coordinator) presented Prof. Reynolds and Prof. Park with a sign to mark the start of CEDAR's LEAF Innovation Centre status.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

On the 14th March 2018 the University of Reading's Centre for Dairy Research ([CEDAR](#)) held an event to recognize its 25th Anniversary since opening in April 1992 and the start of its new LEAF 'Innovation Centre' status.

CEDAR launches its new LEAF 'Innovation Centre' Status

Prof. Julian Park, Head of the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development, began the day by welcoming the group of 45 notable guests to CEDAR. Amongst those in attendance were retired colleagues who were instrumental in the initial founding and subsequent success of CEDAR including Prof. Malcolm Stansfield MBE and Prof. Richard Phipps. Leading researchers, industry experts, and local farmers, including former members of the 'CEDAR Supporters' group, formed the remainder of the audience.

Following Prof. Park's welcome, Caroline Drummond, CEO of LEAF, gave a passionate account of the importance of sustainable livestock research and its value to farmer-facing organisations such as LEAF. Prof. Chris Reynolds (CEDAR director) accepted a LEAF Innovation Centre sign to officially commemorate CEDAR's new status and expressed how pleased he was to mark the start of this collaboration that will improve CEDAR's capacity for knowledge exchange and achieving impact from research.

A chance to showcase new livestock research facilities

The Centre for Dairy Research has benefitted from significant investment in recent years with a renovation to the milking parlour and dairy buildings in 2007, a new dry cow barn in 2016, and four new respiration chambers for measuring energy utilisation in cattle and an extension to the Meat and Growth Research Facility in 2017/18. Funding for these facilities has been provided by the NIRD Trust. Following the launch of CEDAR as a LEAF Innovation Centre, guests divided into smaller groups to visit research discussion groups around the site in order to view and learn about these cutting-edge facilities. Dr. Dave Humphries (Research Director) spoke about the specialist research facilities for detailed metabolic studies, and Barney Jones (Research Coordinator) was on hand to describe the work of the applied research facilities where up to 200 cows can be fed and monitored individually. Finally, James Lamburn (Farm Manager) gave an overview of the commercial dairy and farming operations. The morning tours concluded at lunchtime when a coach was made available to transport guests to the Agriculture Building on Earley Gate Campus.

"It's wonderful to see the level of collaboration that now occurs between UK livestock research organisations" – Prof. Michael Lee, Rothamsted North Wyke



Dr. Sinclair Mayne, CEO of the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute of Northern Ireland delivered a keynote presentation on current and future developments in dairy production.

A review of CEDAR's history and its notable research outputs

The afternoon programme of talks enabled guests to get a sense of both CEDAR's history and its current and future research direction. University of Reading staff and students were invited to join the group giving an audience of over 80.

A Centre of Excellence...

Prof. Chris Reynolds began the afternoon session with a moving review of CEDAR's history. His talk, which was co-authored by Prof. Phipps, included historic photographs and news articles dating back to the inauguration of the site, publications written by CEDAR scientists over the years, and success stories of early career researchers who began illustrious careers at CEDAR. Prof. Reynolds particularly praised the importance of the 'CEDAR Supporters Group' of farmers and industry professionals that was instrumental in facilitating knowledge transfer between farmers and researchers in the 1990s. The talk concluded with a dedication to CEDAR's founders, some of whom are sadly no longer with us.

"I was reminded whilst collecting these historic photographs of CEDAR that we are truly standing on the shoulders of giants" – Prof. Chris Reynolds, Current CEDAR Director

Current and future developments in dairy production

The keynote presentation of the day was delivered by Dr. Sinclair Mayne, CEO of the Agri-Food Biosciences Institute (AFBI), on the topic of 'Current and Future Developments in Dairy Productions'. In the talk Dr. Mayne raised the issue of the lack of progress on increasing milk output from forages in practice, despite significant research investment in this area. He also warned that future challenges would come in the form of requirements for reduced environmental pollutants such as ammonia, but finished the talk optimistically by saying that new opportunities would also arise from the development of innovative technologies.

Finishing the afternoon, three shorter presentations were given on current areas of research that are ongoing at CEDAR. Prof. Ian Givens took the stage to speak on the role of dairy products in a healthy and balanced diet. Dr. Les Crompton followed with an update on a [six-year DEFRA funded study](#) into the long-term effects of feeding cattle low protein diets to improve protein efficiency. This project is unprecedented in its scale and duration following 215 cows through 3 entire lactations with follow up studies concerning effects on the offspring of those cattle and determinants of individual animal variation in protein efficiency. Finally, Dr. Anna Thomson closed the afternoon with a talk on CEDAR's latest long-term study: [The DiverseForages Project](#). This project, which is running from 2016-2020 is investigating whether diverse multi-species pastures can provide sustainable but productive grazing for the livestock sector.

Following the final talk, many in the audience commented on how impressed they were with the research showcased, and noted the outstanding contribution that CEDAR had made in the field of livestock sustainability over its 25 years. A shift in attitude over this time-period, from universities mainly competing for funding to a rise in collaborative research, was also mentioned and praised by those in attendance. There was also a notable buzz around the day on social media, with many attendees tweeting their congratulations to CEDAR using the hashtag #CEDAR25.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The University of Reading Farms run a number of engagement events each year. Next up, the general public are invited to join us for 'Open Farm Sunday' at our mixed farming operation in Sonning on 10th June 2018. Admission will be free but booking will be essential and registration will open in Spring. www.reading.ac.uk/events

The CEDAR organising team would like to thank the University Endowment Fund for supporting this event.