

Sir,

FOLLOWING the success of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) Dairy Mastitis Control Plan (DMCP) since the scheme originally launched in 2009, we wish to advise veterinary surgeons of the next phase of the DMCP in 2017 and beyond. In recent years, the DMCP has had a significant positive impact on-farm, with nearly 400 vets and advisers trained to use the plan and more than 15 per cent of the national dairy herd estimated to have received mastitis control through the DMCP. Reductions in clinical mastitis rates of 20 per cent and new infection rates as measured by somatic cell count of the order of 10 to 15 per cent have been observed from data submitted by herds receiving mastitis control through the DMCP. Importantly, data suggest that use of the DMCP can result in a 40 per cent reduction in lactating cow intramammary antimicrobial use.

To date, the use of the DMCP nationwide has met with keen interest both at home and abroad, with other endemic disease control projects, such as the Healthy Feet Programme and Action Johnes, following on from a nationwide mastitis approach, and other countries adopting similar approaches to the DMCP itself. The AHDB remains committed to continuing the national DMCP scheme and is determined to support the plan and extend its scope and influence. We therefore invite existing veterinary surgeons using the plan, and other interested colleagues, to subscribe to the DMCP scheme in 2017, either as individuals or as a practice, by e-mailing dmcp@qmms.co.uk, and look forward to further progress with mastitis control in the UK.