



Living Lab about antimicrobial use in the UK dairy calf rearing industry



Living Lab Coordinators

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Calf rearing

Cattle

The UK Living Lab consists of a newly created core group of 8 calf rearers (6 females, 2 males). 11 Key stakeholders of 7 organizations including academics, vets, government representatives, industry representatives and other farmers were invited to join some meetings to give presentations and undertake knowledge exchange with the Living Lab participants. A 'bottom up' approach was used because the case study was 'marginal care': calves and their carers tend not to be considered the most important actors on the farm. Starting from January 2021, 11 Living Lab virtual meetings were held. Based on the discussions in the Living Lab, an Action Lab was established to start a trial. Both the Living Lab and the Action Lab are still ongoing.

The strategy tested in the Living Lab

The Living Lab was focused on empowering and raising the status of calf rearers. This is achieved through the members increasing their own learning, exchanging views with influential decision makers and participating in public facing knowledge exchange activities. Currently videos by the calf rearers about their experiences of being a calf rearer are in progress to share.

In the Action Lab, two members of the Living Lab are working with Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA), the body tasked with setting and achieving AMU targets, to trial a central data hub to record AMU and identify challenges and solutions. Currently in the UK actors record AMU in different systems and data are not shared. The organization Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) launched an eMedicines hub in 2021 to record medicine use in the beef and dairy sectors, and the Action Lab is trialing and evaluating it and devising strategies to further its uptake.

The roadmap to implementation

During the Living Lab stakeholders presented topics of interest to the group, followed by a group discussion. Reports are sent to participants summarizing the presentation and discussion. In late 2021 the group decided they would like to keep this format but also move towards being an Action Lab. During this phase, the presentation and discussion is followed by an hour of discussion about the group about Action Lab activities.

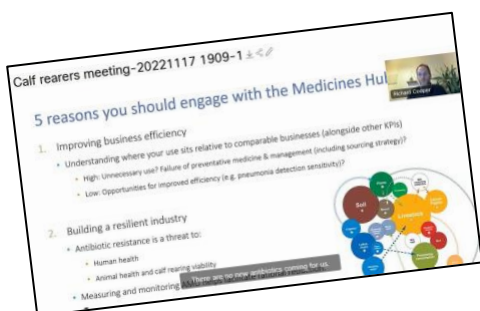
In terms of empowerment, the Living Lab participants benefited from a co-learning event in Denmark where they discussed issues with other Living Labs and visited farms. Members of the Living Lab had the opportunity to share their views and ideas with influential UK decision makers who also attended the event.

In the Action Lab, two members of the Living Lab became calf rearer representatives with RUMA and feed back to the Living Lab about their activities during the last 5 Living Lab meetings.



The impact created by the Living Lab

- **Animal Health:** Improving the health of calves involves raising the profile and status of calf rearers on the farm enabling calf rearers to have greater decision-making power in relation to allocation of resources. The Living Lab participants have been empowering themselves by learning more about calf rearing, and sharing their views through videos and with key stakeholders. A video shared during GB calf week communicated the importance of calf rearing to the farming community.
- **Costs and Savings:** The Living Lab has involved knowledge exchange on the cost effectiveness of different calf husbandry practices and systems, including contract calf rearing which is a growing sector in the UK.
- **AMU:** In the UK an important step towards meeting AMU reduction targets is having adequate data on AMU in the beef and dairy sectors. The ongoing input from the Action Lab is valuable in helping RUMA and AHDB identify challenges and implement strategies in increasing uptake of the eMedicines Hub among farmers.



Industry stakeholders; Richard Cooper (RUMA) and Jenny Gibbons (AHDB) give presentations to UK calf rearers.



Challenges

- Relying on the energy and unpaid time of already busy calf rearers and key stakeholders.
- Finding pathways for the calf rearers to have influence in the sector through the 'bottom up' approach.
- Creating focus on particular issues when members of the Living Lab have diverse interests.

Successes

- Calf rearers as an 'untapped resource' with energy and enthusiasm for learning and bringing about change in the sector.
- Industry bodies (e.g., RUMA and AHDB) embrace calf rearer collaboration which opened doors for the Action Lab to have input.
- Cross-country co-learning was experienced as energizing and informative.

A 'bottom up' Living Lab approach allows calf rearers to set the agenda and have their voices heard but relies on the enthusiasm of people who are already busy. The Living Lab process facilitated group members' access to influential industry groups to share their perspectives on the dairy industry.

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