Title: Preparing Danish milk production for the future – the role of research

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Abstract: The Danish dairy industry is mainly comprised of farmers, who are organised in cooperatives, which own the dairies. This creates a unique value chain, where the different production processes are interlocked. A single farm has between 150 to 1500 dairy cows, primarily Holstein. Two thirds of the production is exported.

Danish milk production is the most modern in the EU and our productivity is in the absolute world elite, because we continuously research the improvement potential and maintain a high level of know-how in the dairy farming sector. Furthermore we have a strong and uniquely coherent value chain, which is supported by highly skilled veterinarians and agronomists. This gives us a high milk yield and great opportunities for export, because Denmark is known for high quality dairy products with high standards of animal welfare, which is what consumers want. We have developed specific strategic goals in order to ensure that Denmark can maintain this market position.

Productivity is improved through increased milk performance, increased net gain in calves for slaughter, growth in beef calves, improved feed conversion, better nature conservation through profitability incentives and more effective services, which provide a foundation for sustainable growth, and a better competitive position in the longer term. As such we utilize the available technology to monitor key performance indicators on efficient production, animal welfare, medicine consumption, mortality and environmental impact.

Great results have already been achieved from our research within optimal feeding, breeding, disease fighting, milk quality standards and lean management, ensuring our current success. Going forward, we should continue to develop our knowledge in these areas, to further ensure progress.