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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Consistent Measurement and Monitoring Programs Crucial for  
Identifying and Managing Hidden Costs of Transition Disease on the Dairy**

*Elanco Animal Health Seminar Highlighted  
Fresh Cow Concerns, Dairy Sustainability and Innovation*

Greenfield, Ind. (April 10, 2017) – From discussing care of fresh cows to embracing sustainability best practices, Elanco Animal Health recently presented a seminar highlighting the role of innovation in the dairy industry. The pre-conference seminar took place in conjunction with the Central Plains Dairy Expo in Sioux Falls, SD on March 28, 2017.

Elanco experts shared highlights about the full costs of transition disease in the dairy industry, and the impact of sustainability and innovation along the I-29 Dairy Corridor in Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota.

“The dairy industry is a highly competitive business and the bar for success is constantly rising. To be successful in this environment requires continued improvement driven by sound decision making and innovation,” said Michael Overton, DVM, MPVM, Advisor – Dairy Analytics, Elanco Knowledge Solutions.

At the seminar, Overton presented *Transition Diseases: Measuring, Monitoring, and What Do They Really Cost Your Operation?* while Roger Cady, PhD, Global Sustainability Lead, Scientific Affairs & Policy for Elanco shared *The Positive Impact of Innovation on the I-29 Dairy Corridor*.

Highlights from the seminar presentations follow:

**Effective Monitoring Programs Critical for Managing, Improving Transition Cow Care**

The full financial impact of fresh cow disease is typically undervalued. As such, producers are encouraged to manage with the long-term impact of illness in mind.

“The total costs associated with transition disease issues are far greater than the direct costs such as therapeutics, veterinary fees, and discarded milk,” said Overton. “The negative impacts on future milk production, reproduction, and culling extend well into lactation and usually far exceed the immediate costs of treatment.”

Overton further explained that the “downstream” costs – including the risk of subsequent disease – equal lost opportunity that is often more difficult to recognize and quantify than the initial out-of-pocket treatment costs. Misclassification of disease issues also leads to underestimating disease costs.

Without good disease recording, it is difficult – if not impossible – to make appropriate and timely management adjustments, he added. An important step in managing and mitigating disease costs is implementing good monitoring programs.

“It’s simply not enough to measure how many cows were sold or died within the first 30 days in milk,” said Overton. “Producers are encouraged to aggressively and accurately monitor key predictors of future performance.”

Specifically, he encourages a strong focus on parameters such as stocking density, feed quality, urine pH, and days in the close-up pen. Additionally, it is important to keep consistent, detailed records of disease issues that increase the risk of premature culling such as retained placenta, ketosis, mastitis, metritis and milk fever, he added.

“The bottom-line is that accurately monitoring key diseases and their indicators in a consistent, repeatable manner allows producers to detect changes well before issues show up on the culling report,” said Overton. “In turn, producers are much better equipped to make sound management decisions based on quality data.”

### **Embracing Sustainable Innovation is a Positive for All: People, Animals and the Planet**

Sustainability relies on continuous improvement. Producers of the I-29 Dairy Corridor are making significant improvements in remaining sustainable, while understanding that additional opportunities remain within the region for continued progress.

“Producers along the I-29 Corridor are recognized as leaders in making milk production and dairy products among the most sustainable in existence – not only in the United States, but also in the entire world – by embracing the concept of continued progress and innovation,” said Cady.

For the dairy industry, the key is connecting herd performance factors to accepted key performance indicators. Then, he adds, the next step is successfully communicating sustainability progress to retailers and consumers. Cady explained that retailers have now become a “second gatekeeper” (after regulatory agencies) regarding what they will and will not accept for sale in their outlets based on what they believe is sustainable food production – regardless of how sound the basis for those beliefs.

“While sustainability has become a complex issue, at its core, it really is about being a farm operator in 20 years from now and passing a successful farm to the next generation,” said Cady. “What it is *not* about is regulation and retail mandates. When something is sustainable, all benefit: people, animals and the planet.”

Based on the most widely recognized pillars of sustainability – economic, environmental and social – Cady shared that the one most important action that will affect all three is energy conservation. During the presentation, he added that this especially includes energy requirements for animals, otherwise known as farm system feed utilization per unit of milk produced, not just the milking animals feed conversion of the milk herd.

“Numerous performance factors relate to growth, reproduction, health and productivity, but when a producer saves energy and enhances feed utilization, the ripple effect is notable,” said Cady. “More productive feed utilization translates to less feed required, less water required, less land used; lower input costs; and better economic returns....all of which contribute to continuous, sustainable improvement.”

#### **ABOUT ELANCO**

Elanco provides comprehensive products and knowledge services to improve animal health and food-animal production in more than 70 countries around the world. We value innovation, both in scientific research and daily operations, and strive to cultivate a collaborative work environment for more than 6,500 employees worldwide. Together with our customers, we are committed to raising awareness about global food security, and celebrating and supporting the human-animal bond. Founded in 1954, Elanco is a division of Eli Lilly and Company. Our worldwide headquarters and research facilities are located in Greenfield, Indiana. Visit us at [Elanco.com](http://Elanco.com).

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