

Enthusiasm and an eye on the farmer's interest recognised in Dairy Vet of the Year

Jonathan Statham of Bishopton Veterinary Group combined enthusiasm with well applied experience to win the Zoetis-sponsored Dairy Vet of the Year category in the Cream Awards, 2015 Dairy Industry Trade Awards



With the farmer's interest at the very heart of everything he does, Jonathan Statham's protocols have a really positive effect on farm visits. He's bursting with enthusiasm, said the judges, which makes for better management practice. In addition to being a highly effective vet, he is also the driving force behind the development of RAFT, a vet-led farmer training group inspiring farmers to raise their game and gain further qualifications and training.

"We first met Jonathan as a young vet when he visited the farm with one of the senior vets some 15 or so years ago," said Mr and Mrs Robert Graham who nominated him. "Since that first meeting his influence on our 200-cow dairy herd has been immense. His knowledge, both practical and academic, is huge, and his people skills are outstanding, conveying protocols and practices that have a really positive impact on the farms he visits.

"But more than anything, what Jonathan brings onto the farm is enthusiasm and better management," they said. "Staff feel inspired once his visit is over. As well as that, over the years in practice in Ripon he has risen to become one of the senior partners and has attracted outstanding young vets to build a really positive team exuding knowledge and enthusiasm to match his own."

Jonathan graduated from Cambridge Veterinary School in 1996. He is a cattle vet and partner in Bishopton Veterinary Group, a 27-vet practice in Ripon, North Yorkshire (a member of XL Vets) and is director and chair of RAFT solutions Ltd. He is past president of the British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA) and the Yorkshire Veterinary Society (YVS).

Jonathan faced strong competition from Sean Hughes of Tyndale Farm Vets Ltd, who was awarded Highly Commended. Sean has a very loyal following of dairy farmers and clearly impresses his clients by his careful planning and attention to detail – his prevention rather than cure approach. He is proactive in developing herd health strategies that suit the individual needs of customers with practical cost-effective measures that produce results.

"Joining Tyndale Veterinary practice in 2010, Sean developed a strong and fiercely loyal following of dairy farmers who, quite frankly, wouldn't have anyone else looking after their girls," said colleague Sam Ecroyd who nominated Sean.

"With one weekly, 11 fortnightly and two monthly routine dairy clients, and a total of around 4,000 dairy cattle under his immediate care, Sean prides himself on being meticulous, knowledgeable and efficient with his



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From left: Sam Gayton, ruminant business unit director of Zoetis; Sean Hughes; Steve Walls, awards' compere

advice," he added. "Always practical and with a focus on herd health, wellbeing and efficient production, Sean ensures he tailors his guidance to the individual farm and it's staff, creating strong working partnerships with his clients."

"His attitude towards helping his clients reach production targets is second to none," Mr Ecroyd said. "Providing thorough fertility visits on a regular basis, Sean is able to liaise with farmers over their farm's reproductive performance. With the use of data, particularly surrounding fertility KPIs, he uses the latest treatments and synchronisation protocols accordingly to ensure lactation curves are kept stable and calving blocks are kept tight. Dairy clients' fertility performance is also greatly improved by Sean's focus on areas such as mastitis, lameness, nutrition and the transition period. He uses his extensive knowledge to ensure farmers understand the importance of these issues and their effect on cattle productivity and economic efficiency.

"His surgical technique is methodical and extremely skilled following the highest standards of practice and sterility at all times whilst keeping animal welfare as paramount," he continued. "Sean is currently training three junior vets in this pioneering technique.

"It's a privilege to be able to call Sean a colleague. We can't speak highly enough of him and he's respected tremendously throughout the whole practice. His ongoing clinical support and guidance to our less experienced vets is invaluable, transferring knowledge at staff meetings and on a day to day basis," concluded Mr Ecroyd.