

We Have the Past; The Future Will Be Made Together

Since its foundation in 1919, when Dutch farmers and dairy organisations joined forces to combat animal diseases, Royal GD has focused on animal health. Today we still work with the same passion, for the same goal, backed up by a century of experience. Ruth Bouwstra, Director Contract Research & Consulting and Manager Poultry Department, explains more.

A century-worth of GD means lots of developments and changes. But some things never change. Ruth Bouwstra agrees: "The Animal Health Department for Cattle in Friesland was established to combat tuberculosis in cattle. This was followed by many other diseases. Although we still combat diseases, our knowledge has grown and nowadays we do much more; more than the founders of GD were able to do a hundred years ago. While our vets still visit farmers and their diseased animals, nowadays we also conduct scientific studies and carry out diagnostic and preventative practical research into animal diseases. We have established animal health monitoring programmes, and supported agricultural sectors with disease outbreaks such as Q fever and avian influenza."

Always Looking Forward

As mentioned above, monitoring animal health is one of GD's priorities. We monitor the animal health of all livestock in the Netherlands: 12.4 million pigs, 4.3 million cows and more than 90 million chickens. Dutch farms have to comply with high quality standards and with strict rules relating to livestock diseases and antibiotics. With this in mind, we created Plexus. This software tool is the future, a future in which technology and data are becoming more and more important. But what is Plexus?

Plexus: Not Just a Tool

"Plexus is a software tool that enables you to analyse the impact of interventions in your production chain. It makes it easy to register a large variety of data in one place. The system shows trends and correlations. It also provides insights into animal health status and into the effect of actions such as vaccination schemes. And it gives advice on how to achieve better health. It enables you to administer all your data such as flock composition, vaccination schemes, lab tests and audit results in one place. With Plexus, we hope to help integrations around the world to create a healthy livestock," Ruth Bouwstra explains. "The health of your livestock is a double advantage: healthy animals require less antibiotics and perform better with less effort. For business this means increased revenue from selling product at a higher price, while saving money in the production chain."

Sharing Knowledge Worldwide

Looking forward and creating new things doesn't stop at developing technology-based tools. We also like to look further afield, for example into global education. "At our GD Academy, we share our veterinary knowledge through courses, workshops and lectures," Ruth clarifies. As more and more GD clients focus on agricultural markets outside the Netherlands, international expertise in terms of animal



health is becoming increasingly important. The Netherlands leads the international field in sustainable production and animal welfare: "That's why our work doesn't stop at the border. Currently we are setting up open and custom-made training courses in several countries worldwide."

The Coming Century

"In the future we will need to feed the world together. A growing population, old and new threats to animal and human health, and the need for sustainable food production processes, mean it will become more and more important to join forces. Sharing knowledge, collaborating to combat worldwide threats, and co-creating new techniques are essential to preparing for the future. GD Animal Health, a company with 100 years' experience, can become an important partner in animal health, worldwide." Ruth tells us. "With Plexus and GD Academy, our focus is clearly on growth: on growing economies and on markets where there is a growing need for animal protein. We want to meet and tell the world what we are capable of. We have a past, but the future is made together."

Celebrating 100 years of GD Animal Health

A century of GD; such a special anniversary had to be celebrated. And what a celebration it was, honoured as we were by special guests and presents. On Thursday 16th May, King Willem-Alexander joined us in our celebrations. And one day later, on behalf of the King, the mayor of Deventer handed us our Royal designation.

"The Royal visit and designation are of course a great honour," says Ynte Schukken, CEO of GD. "Over the past century we have achieved a lot in the area of animal health and animal welfare, and together we want to achieve much more in the future. 'Ahead in animal health'; that's our ambition." GD wants to carry its designation with pride, which is why the Royal crown has been added to the logo and the trade name is being changed to Royal GD. "But apart from these changes, we will still be committed to animal health with the same passion as we had over the past hundred years."