

Lely Center Midlands



Three generations: Richard, Neale and William Sadler

"We reintroduced the dairy enterprise in 2006 and installed a Lely Astronaut A3. I've never looked back. The herd is averaging 10,000 litres in a high welfare sustainable system. I've been able to enjoy dairy farming again and I've got my life back."

– Neale Sadler, 70 cow Holstein herd, Shropshire

Bright farming is yours by choice.



Welcome!

Your automated milking and feeding experts for the Midlands

Lely Center Midlands strives to give our customers the best service, offering farmers the latest innovations and solutions.

We have been based out of our Stafford depot for over 10 years with hubs in South West Wales, Cheshire and Nottinghamshire. We've evolved over that time to provide a full sales to service package including project coordination and aftersales support.

Our aim is to work with farmers to help them increase their farm's efficiency and effectiveness from a productivity and financial perspective.

Our team consists of 12 dedicated engineers who specialise in all Lely products from Astronaut robotic milking systems to the Vector robotic feeding system. Within the team of engineers, we have several who have been with us for over 10 years.

The engineers are located throughout our area thus ensuring fast and efficient service and back up 365 days a year, with multiple engineers on-call 24/7. Together with our sales support, in house barn design expert and farm management support team we offer a complete and on-going partnership to assist our robot farmers in achieving the best possible results from their Lely products.

Lely Center Midlands, Cesca Beswick

Meet the team



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Torrence, Nick, Katie and Harley Summerfield

The latest milestone in milking A5's introduce major improvements to herd performance and efficiency

"Installing Lely milking robots has truly changed our lives and we're now working together as a family," says Nick Summerfield who manages the 225-cow pedigree Summerfields Holstein herd with his wife Katie, son Harley and daughter Torrence. "Since switching on four Lely A5s 12 months ago, we're managing the herd more efficiently, we've more flexibility, we've a better work-life balance and we've succession.

"I was stuck in a routine running ragged and didn't want to spend another 20 years standing in a parlour. We were milking 370 head, the herd couldn't get past 10,000 to 10,500 litres on twice a day, milking took 3.5 hours managed by three people and we couldn't face upping to three times. When my brother, Tom and I decided to divide the business, that provided the opportunity to swap our 25-year-old herringbone for robots. Today, the herd is heading towards 12,000 litres on 3.4 visits, the cows are doing it

with ease and the system is designed for one person to manage at any one time."

Back in October 2020, Harley took a month off work to help with the robot start up, a period of time training the cows to the robots. "His technological knowledge and attention to detail proved invaluable to the new system. He now is a full time employee within the family business. He agrees the robots have made the decision to work at home an easy one," says Katie.

She continues: "We're all now able to access and share the herd's entire information from one system - Horizon, Lely's software programme. That's a massive bonus; we're no longer dependent on one person. When Nick had a spell off work and in hospital a while back, it made us realise just how vulnerable we all were in the business. He had all the information in his head and we simply couldn't access it. Horizon has also

made the Farm Assurance audit easier; we've now more time to keep on top of the paperwork."

Whilst Torrence has been back home for six years after working with herds in the US, she is continuing her role rearing the youngstock at home, however the robots have introduced a more relaxed working day and for example, the opportunity for better calf colostrum management. "I've now more thinking time and attention to detail has improved to such a degree we can get heifers breeding on time - age at first calving is falling from an average 27 to 24 months," she says. "Best of all the robots have allowed a lot more time for non-farming stuff like riding out. Before there was no time for anything but farming."

- Increased yield and overall performance
- Enhanced business management
- Better quality of life
- Flexibility plus future succession

Lely delivery custom-made solutions

Build your own Astronaut milking system

Introducing automation - a new routine on your farm, providing greater flexibility, more efficiency and a better work life balance.

When you spend one third of your working life on repetitive tasks like milking, you can imagine the possibilities it brings when you automate those tasks. The physical relief, time savings and greater flexibility offer opportunities for each farmer. It allows you to focus on the more important things, like herd health, improved management and, of course, family life. As for the cows, it's been proven time and again that they benefit from robotic milking systems. They are more relaxed, healthier and reward you with more milk.

At Lely Center Midlands, we know all dairy farms are different. Your farm is unique, just like you and your goals. Whilst modern dairy farming can be a complex business, at the end of the day, there needs to be milk in the tank. Please take some time to think about your situation. Imagine how your farm would operate at its best. What is important for you and your farm? We are eager to know what drives you and what you consider to be the most important; in turn, we're able to offer various custom-made solutions, solely designed for your farm which enable

you to build your own Astronaut milking system.

Focus on feed efficiency

Feed choice enables you to feed each cow to its individual needs, improve overall efficiency, achieve healthier cows, reduce costs and improve overall efficiency.

Feeding choice includes:

- Dynamic feeding software
- Second feed dispenser
- Titania liquid feed dispenser
- Feed presence sensor

Add precision to reproduction

Repro choice features an extra set of eyes to see individual cows on heat and inseminate them at the right moment. In turn, the system will enable you to achieve a higher conception rate, reduce the calving interval and bring both labour and semen cost savings.

Repro choice includes:

- Long-distance tags
- Gravitator weighing floor
- Separation gate
- Horizon reproduction module

In control of udder health

Udder control choice provides clear insights into udder health, enables you to better understand when to take

action and improves overall efficiency. The system helps to eliminate bacteria, avoid cross-contamination before each milking and subsequently reduce any necessary treatment and improve milk quality.

Udder control choice includes:

- MQC-C somatic cell count and temperature check per quarter
- Lely Pura steam cleaning after each milking
- Improve hoof health
- Hoof health choice features the Lely Meteor approach, a sustainable, cow-friendly and safe manner in the robot and in turn enabling improved cow mobility, health and performance and reduced vet costs.

Hoof health choice includes:

- Lely Meteor automatic sprayer
- Lely Meteor mobile sprayer
- Farm Management Support advice
- Lely Consumables care products

Know your cows

Cow health choice enables you to take more control over cow health and make the right decisions with advanced sensors and easy-to-use information which drive efficient routines, increase cow health and milk production and reduce vet costs as well as the workload.

Cow health choice includes:

- Long distance rumination monitoring system
- Collars and weights
- Fat, protein, and lactose measurement and analysis

Support your grazing strategy

Grazing choice enables you to continue graze your cows whilst having full control of your milk production. The system eliminates the need to collect cows and there's no time wasted by waiting in the collecting area, consequently there's more time for your cows to eat, rest, and be milked.

Grazing choice includes

- Grazeway separation gates enabling an ABC grazing system
- Farm Management Support advice



Welcome to Horizon

Lely's new decision-support platform providing you with tools to help you work more efficiently, and offer more control to achieve your own goals, make your life easier, your herd healthier and the farm more profitable.

Decision support

Lely Horizon uses smart algorithms based on experiences of thousands of dairy farmers worldwide. The farm management application elevates your data to forecast performances and offers you clear choices for farming optimisation. It helps you classify milk profiles on bimodality and adjust the pre-treatment time resulting in more stress-free milking.

Connecting and combining

Lely Horizon combines individual cow data from your Lely equipment with third party information into one single app.

Easy to use

Lely Horizon sets the future standard in user friendliness. Its intuitive user interface gives you fast access to all the information you need to be provided with practical advice. You can check the well-being of your herd and receive notifications directly on your smartphone, for example, you will receive a notification about clearly ketosis suspected cows at an early stage to help prevent losses.



Lely Midlands:

Delivering 24/7 local support



Brandon Hunt and Ken Samuel

We caught with one of our service engineers, Brandon Hunt whilst he was in Gloucestershire servicing Ken Samuel's three A5s. Lely automated systems are guaranteed reliable, that's a fact. In addition, we have a team of 12 professionally certified and dedicated technicians located throughout our Midlands area to ensure local support and backup, 24/7, 365 days a year. All our robots are routinely serviced in accordance to the Lely preventive maintenance programme.

Ken Samuel: both my herdsman, Paul Hayes and myself have a strong working relationship with Brandon developed over eight years. Brandon and his colleagues, Steve, Rufus and Oli are legends going above and beyond keeping the machines working, so I try to look after them with plenty of coffee and cake. They know the farm, and I completely trust them with my robots. If there is an issue then they know exactly what to do 98% of the time, and the other 2% they work out. They'll work through the night if necessary; for example, when mice bit through the cables and they had to be replaced, Steve arrived at 10.00pm and completed the job at 6.00am. Brandon helped with the smooth transfer of the A3 robots to the A5, long days but all went very well, and he keeps the A5 robots upto date and regularly serviced.

If I was to start all over, then back up support would be high on the list; Lely is outstanding.

Brandon Hunt: I love my job. I value a good working relationship with all our customers and Ken is no exception. Getting to know them is really important, particularly when more than anything I'm a voice on the phone helping to rectify a fault, for example changing a water valve or the solenoid on the end of the shut off sleeve. It's those sorts of issues I can easily talk through and farmers are able to sort out the majority for themselves. However, if it's electrical related, then they'll need one of us and we're on call 24/7, even Christmas Day; we're guaranteed to be on farm within 90 minutes. I see Ken and Paul every four months; all robots are routinely serviced at 16-week intervals. However, to keep a robot milking, then it's down to Ken carrying out preventative daily maintenance; I briefed him and it's very straight forward - just takes a few minutes. Lely technology is now so advanced, A5 robot breakdowns are absolutely minimal.

"We used to milk through a herringbone parlour until I took a leap of faith and invested in three Lely A3s in 2009; we took advantage of Defra's previous grant scheme and then upgraded to three Lely A5s in 2020.

Introducing milking robots was primarily a lifestyle choice, followed by improved cow performance and subsequent profitability together with welfare. I believe if you look after the animals, then they'll look after you." - Ken Samuel

Farm Fact File

- 220 acre organic grazing unit
- 150 cow commercial Holstein Friesian herd
- 8,500 litres, 4.2% butterfat, 3.3% protein
- 3 Lely A5s
- 2.9 visits



Turning the page - from rotary to robots

Swapping a 20-year-old 28-point rotary parlour for six A5s has helped Andrew Dale to step up efficiency towards a sustainable future for his 350-cow herd comprising mainly Holstein with a few Fleckvieh crosses.

"Our internal rotary was getting to the point it was unreliable and we were heading for serious problems with the running gear. Added to that was the issue of sourcing reliable, trained staff," explains Andrew who manages Newnham Farm, a 490 acre Shropshire unit.

"We had been considering milking robots for some time. I like innovation and trying new things. When we seriously started to look at the cost of investing in A5s, we found installing Lely milking systems in existing sheds worked out less than a new rotary or alternatively a 24 x 48 herringbone parlour together with new infrastructure including shed to accommodate the parlour, collecting yard and associated metal work.

"We installed the first four A5s in 2018, there was minimal disruption and we were pleased with the herd's performance as a result of installing the robots and giving the cows their chance to show their true milking potential.. Since our current farming infrastructure doesn't allow for any major expansion, we agreed to slightly reduce cow numbers and invest in two more A5s which were eligible for Defra's previous grant scheme."

Performance comparison of milking systems at Newnham Farm

	Rotary	A5 robot
Labour	3 full time + 3 part time	3 full time
Cow numbers	400	350
Yield (litres/lactation)	8,000 (2 x milkings)	11,000 (ave 2.9 milkings)
Solids: (fat %, protein %)	3.8; 3.2	4.15; 3.28
Preg rate	18	24

Source: Dale | Lely

Apart from a 37% yield increase from an average 2.9 milkings, Andrew lists a number of other benefits.

Consistency: performing the same level of service 24/7, and for example each cow is guaranteed to be fully milked on all four quarters.

Improved management: with more available time accompanied with Lely's Horizon management software, we're able to individually manage each cow.

Reduced concentrate usage: by almost 60% and we've made similar cost savings. Introducing Lely's new Concentrate Optimiser software module has enabled us to move from feeding the herd to yield to feeding to economic output on an individual cow basis. Yield and constituents have been maintained and we've witnessed no body weight loss.

Improved fertility: stress levels have been eliminated since they're no longer standing for long periods in the collecting yard which was too small.

Improved team work: our staff are more relaxed too, operating a more normal working day - from 6.30am to 5.30pm. Before it was a 5.00am start running through up to 7.00pm. We were always worried someone wouldn't turn up. Whilst two of our three-strong team continue to work with the livestock they're able to do more valuable work than putting on cups, for example targeting DIY at the optimum time rather than after the milking routine, and more preventative footwork.

Labour savings: we no longer have the challenge of finding and employing part time milking staff.

More flexibility: whilst we're carrying out the same tractor work - from drilling to silage carting, the schedule is more relaxed. We now have more time to do things more efficiently.

More family time and a better social life: Last but not least, more family time and a better social life and we hope the system will provide a potential platform for the next generation.

Lely milking - exploiting yield potential, naturally



Tom & Ed Rowland

If you are pushing for yield and breeding cows yielding well over the 12,000 litre mark, then robotic milking systems will provide a solution to enable these high genetic merit cows to achieve their true potential in a high welfare, low labour system. We visited Cheshire producers, Ed Rowland and his parents, Tom and Ruth who milk a 200-cow pedigree Holstein herd currently averaging 12,500kg and a commendable five lactations. The partners took advantage of Defra's previous grant scheme replacing three Lely A3 milking robots with four Lely A5s.

Ed Rowland considered returning to re-installing a parlour when he had to face the fact his three, 11-year-old Lely A3s were both stretched to the limits and needed upgrading.

“We looked at the options, but it didn't take very long for me to make up my mind. The benefits of robots over a parlour were very evident,” he explains. “Our long-term strategy has been to breed for yield and longevity, we're pleased with the outcome and our milking robots have certainly helped us to get there. The herd which is in the breed's top 10% for Lifetime Daily Yield is currently averaging 3.5 visits to the robot, we have 88 cows making between 3.5 and five visits, our top cows are producing 17,000 to 19,000kg in 305 days, whilst we are currently milking 12 cows that have recorded lifetime yields over 100,000kg.

“For starters, milking in a herringbone would have involved far too much moving and waiting time in a day, never mind finding additional reliable and trained local labour which was already a challenge for twice a day milking back in 2009, before we initially

invested in Lely robots. With 200 cows, we would have been tied up for at least three hours, three times a day, whereas nowadays, Dad and I are able to manage the cows and youngstock with just one full time employee, Dean Jones whilst Mum focuses on calf rearing.

“Equally important, frequent robot milking also removes udder pressure and spreads concentrate allocation more evenly throughout the day,” Ed explains.

The Rowlands are born stockmen; they are dedicated to working amongst their cows, however they admit it's the milking robots that provide the ultimate attention to detail. “The cows are making their own decisions when to eat, drink, relax or be milked which makes for a really quiet temperament; they're healthy and stress free which we believe contributes to more milk in the tank,” he says. “And however good our stockmanship, the robots provide that consistent management 24/7. For example, we can depend on each quarter being individually and fully milked out at every visit.

“We also like the T4C software programme; it's a useful tool throwing up potential health issues before they actually manifest themselves so we can get on the case before they progress.”

He adds: “Going forward if we are to continue our current breeding strategy in order to farm a sustainable and profitable high welfare enterprise, then I believe that a robotic milking system is the only way to go.”

Farm fact file

- 250 acres, owner occupied tenanted mix
- 200 cow pedigree Holstein herd plus followers
- 12,500 litres, 3.96% butterfat, 3.2% protein rolling average
- 20.17kg/day Lifetime Daily Yield (national average 11.27kg/day)
- 15% replacement rate

