



■ *Hugh McClymont expects the new vacuum on demand system to cut the electricity bill by 80 per cent.*

# Cutting costs is part of the business

UK farmers are seriously looking at ways of cutting their input costs – and this is also having spin-offs for the environment and animal welfare.

**A** £380,000 investment at Acre-head, one of two dairy units at the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC), Crichton Royal, Dumfries, is dramatically reducing the amount of electricity used and is also utilising recovered roof water.

The parlour's vacuum on demand system is a key energy and cost saving feature which is anticipated to make up to 80 per cent savings on purchased electricity by only generating as much vacuum as needed by quickly reacting to changing vacuum demand and regulating the speed of the vacuum pump. A further benefit of the new

vacuum system for the dairyman is that the parlour is virtually silent in operation thanks also to overhead stainless steel cabinets which house the Automatic Cluster Remover (ACR) and pulsation lines. "A lot of thought was put into the design in terms of the standing position and size requirements. Not only is the parlour ideal for the cows but it is critical that it is a good environment for the labour team," said farm manager Hugh McClymont.

**Resource free of charge.** Rainwater from the 2,400 square metre dairy building roof is pumped through a filtration system and fed to the plate cooler and heat recovery unit.

One of the two 6,000 litre milk vats is also dissipating heat through a heat pump into mains water used for plant washing. Roof water is available for cows to drink and also for washing down the parlour yard and equipment. Future plans are for the sinking of a borehole for water supplies. "We have seen a general lift in incomes across most sectors and those who want a future in the industry are taking strategic investment decisions to make their business more efficient," says Brian Davidson, senior partner with the Clydesdale Bank. "Farmers see the challenges of rising input costs and are taking action now to mitigate those costs in the