

Scotland's Rural College

## Effect of cattle genotype and feeding regime on greenhouse gas emissions intensity in high producing dairy cows

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1 **Effect of cattle genotype and feeding regime on greenhouse gas emissions intensity in**  
2 **high producing dairy cows**

3

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12

13 **Abstract**

14

15 Improving milk production through livestock feeding and genetics is a promising approach  
16 for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from dairy production systems. This study  
17 investigated emissions intensity, defined as the global warming potential (GWP) per unit  
18 energy corrected milk (ECM) output, of high-producing dairy systems. Objectives of this  
19 study were: to determine the effect of forage regime and cattle genetic line on GHG  
20 emissions from the life cycle of four directly comparable dairy production systems; to  
21 examine differences amongst contributing GHG emissions sources, and to identify key  
22 parameters contributing the most uncertainty in overall GWP. Life cycle analysis (LCA) was  
23 conducted based on seven years data collected from a long-term Holstein-Friesian genetic  
24 and management systems project. The four dairy production systems comprised two feeding  
25 regimes of High and Low Forage applied to each of two genetic lines. The Control line

1 represented the average UK genetics and Select line representing the top 5% of UK genetics  
2 for milk fat and protein.

3 Select genetic line animals managed under Low Forage regime was estimated to hold  
4 potential to reduce emissions intensity by 24% compared to Control genetic merit cows  
5 managed under a High Forage regime. Individually, improving genetic merit of the herd and  
6 implementing Low Forage regime hold potential to reduce emissions intensity by 9% and  
7 16% respectively. Key factors in the differences amongst systems were greater off-farm  
8 emissions under Low Forage regime, and greater on-farm nitrous oxide emissions associated  
9 with High Forage. In contrast to overall emissions, the emissions intensity was lower in Low  
10 Forage groups than in High Forage groups because of high milk yield in Low Forage groups.

11 Six key parameters contained the greatest influence on uncertainty in results. These included:  
12 three Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) coefficients concerning indirect  
13 emissions from volatilized nitrogen ( $EF_4$ ), direct nitrous oxide emissions from nitrogen input  
14 to soil ( $EF_1$ ), and emissions from direct deposition of excreta at pasture ( $EF_{3\text{ PRP}}$ ); and three  
15 system-specific emissions factors for animals' excreted nitrogen rate, enteric methane and  
16 manure methane. The coefficients  $EF_4$ ,  $EF_1$ , and  $EF_{3\text{ PRP}}$  should be prioritized for better  
17 definition in order to minimize uncertainty in future studies.

18

19 **Key Words:** life cycle assessment, dairy, forage, genotype, greenhouse gas, emissions  
20 intensity

21

1 **1. Introduction**

2

3 *1.1. Background*

4

5 There has been increasing attention paid during the past decade to the contribution of food  
6 production to climate change and the challenge faced by society's current demand for  
7 products such as meat and dairy. Globally, the dairy sector contributes 4% of the total  
8 anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (FAO, 2010). If the dairy industry is to  
9 meet the growing global demand for dairy products, ways to minimize GHG emissions per  
10 unit product will become increasingly important. Gerber et al. (2011) defined the GHG  
11 emissions per unit physical output as the emissions intensity of dairy production. Many  
12 countries have established ambitious GHG reduction targets, and the UK dairy industry has  
13 identified a target of 20-30% reduction by 2020 (Dairy Roadmap, 2013) compared to 1990  
14 levels. The magnitude of emissions means that any potential improvements made in the  
15 global warming potential (GWP) of dairy production systems will make a substantial  
16 contribution towards attaining climate change targets around the world.

17

18 *1.2. Greenhouse gas emissions from dairy production systems*

19

20 Component GHG contributing to the total GWP of dairy production systems arise from  
21 processes both on and off the farm. Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) arises from enteric fermentation in  
22 ruminant animals, and from an aerobic fermentation of stored animal manures. Enteric CH<sub>4</sub> is  
23 influenced by the animal's feed intake, feed composition and the type of feed consumed  
24 (Chagunda et al., 2009; Garnsworthy et al., 2012). Emissions of nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) arise  
25 both directly and indirectly from multiple on farm sources (de Boer, 2003). These include the

1 deposition of manure and urine on pasture, application of manure and chemical fertilizers to  
2 crops, and from decomposition of crop residues in the soil (IPCC, 2007). Carbon dioxide  
3 (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions derive mainly from energy use on the farm and in the processes surrounding  
4 external production and transport of purchased feeds and fertilizers. The dynamic relationship  
5 between the operational and natural processes of a dairy production system leads these three  
6 GHG to be inexorably linked. Thus even a small shift in the balance of these GHG emissions  
7 produced may lead to a substantial difference in overall GWP.

8

9 Steinfeld et al. (2006) stated that the most promising approach for reducing emissions from  
10 livestock systems is by improving the efficiency of livestock production through feeding and  
11 genetics. It has been shown that high yielding dairy cows with high feed intakes are  
12 associated with a lower enteric CH<sub>4</sub> output per unit milk (Garnsworthy, 2004; Casey and  
13 Holden, 2005; Bell et al., 2010). However, Chagunda et al. (2009) showed that although  
14 increasing milk yield was associated with a reduction in enteric CH<sub>4</sub> per unit milk, there  
15 could be an increase in excreted waste nitrogen per unit milk and per hectare of land used  
16 depending on the genetic merit of animals and the specifics of the production system. It has  
17 also been demonstrated that while implementing an organic system can reduce overall  
18 emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O, the reduction in GWP may be nullified by lower production and  
19 an inherent overall increase in enteric CH<sub>4</sub> (de Boer, 2003). Weiske et al. (2006) also noted  
20 that, due to the trade-offs amongst dairy GHG emissions, many mitigation measures  
21 suggested in the literature do not always result in the expected reduction potential when  
22 evaluated at the farm level. The overall GHG pollution potential from dairy production  
23 systems is therefore a dynamic process which should be assessed at a whole systems level in  
24 order to optimize the balance of the total output of pollutants against milk production. This

1 whole system analysis can be performed using a method such as Life Cycle Assessment  
2 (LCA).

3

4 Over the past decade, studies have been undertaken at system level examining the  
5 relationships between GHG in dairy farms. Many studies have been aimed towards  
6 demonstrating the application of the LCA method in dairy farming (van der Werf et al., 2009;  
7 O'Brien et al., 2011). Furthermore, LCA studies assessing a whole farm system have been  
8 conducted mainly in the context of providing a comparison between the environmental  
9 efficiency of conventional and organic systems (de Boer, 2003; Thomassen et al., 2008), or  
10 between typical systems at a national level (Cederberg and Flysjö, 2004; Saunders and  
11 Barber, 2007). A recent study study by Kristensen et al (2011) observed the large variations  
12 in GHG emissions per kg product that existed amongst farms within and not between  
13 conventional and organic production systems. Studies at production system level have not  
14 examined in depth the potential that exists to reduce emissions intensity within a herd through  
15 maintaining cows of different genetic merit under different feeding and management regimes.

16

### 17 *1.3. Objectives*

18

19 Objectives of this research were: (1) to determine the effect of forage regime and cattle  
20 genetic line on GHG emissions from the life cycle of four directly comparable dairy  
21 production systems; (2) to examine differences amongst contributing GHG emissions  
22 sources, and; (3) to identify key parameters contributing the most uncertainty in overall  
23 GWP.

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## 25 **2. Materials and Methods**

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## *2.1. Dairy Production Systems*

The study was based on Scotland's Rural College's (SRUC) established long-term Holstein-Friesian genetic and management systems project, situated at SRUC Dairy Research Centre, Crichton Royal Farm (CRF), Dumfries. Data used were collected over seven years, from January 2004 to December 2010, and incorporated specifics of four distinct dairy production systems within a conventional farm. Animals were maintained in two feeding regimes; High Forage (HF) and Low Forage (LF). The HF regime aimed to provide 75% by dry matter (DM) of the herd's total mixed ration (TMR) diet when indoors from home grown forage crops (ryegrass silage, whole-crop maize, whole-crop wheat alkalage) and the remainder of the ration composition coming from purchased concentrated feeds (including: distillers grains, rapeseed meal). In addition, HF cows were grazed ryegrass pasture when available, typically from March to November, therefore the total home grown element of the HF cows' annual diet was greater than 75%. Contrasting, the LF groups were fully housed all year round and fed a TMR comprising 45% by DM of the same home grown forages, with 55% from purchased concentrates (including: wheat, distillers grains, sugar beet pulp, soya meal) imported onto the farm (Chagunda et al., 2009). Within each forage regime, animals comprised two contrasting genetic lines. Control (C) animals were bred to be of average UK genetic merit for milk fat and protein production, and Select (S) animals represented the top 5% of UK genetic merit (Pryce et al., 1999). The Langhill genetic lines have been continuously managed as part of a long-standing dairy cow breeding study since the 1970's. The representativeness of the selection criteria was maintained in each year of the study (Hinks, 1976). Maintaining the specifics of these groups in the long term genotype x feeding regime project resulted in four divergent dairy production systems – HFC, HFS, LFC and

1 LFS (Chagunda et al., 2009). These systems were representative of the interaction between  
2 forage regime and genetic line (Pryce et al., 1999), and also offer a representative cross-  
3 section of existing and potential dairy production systems in the UK. Animals were managed  
4 in a 3 lactations programme before moving out of the systems study, with all-year round  
5 calving, and herd numbers maintained at approximately 50 cows in each group. The 3  
6 lactations management was considered applicable to UK dairy systems as the average dairy  
7 cow lifespan is noted to be 3.3 lactations (FAWC, 2009). Management in 3 lactations applied  
8 a comparable replacement rate amongst systems, however differences existed in the  
9 involuntary culling rate. Cows were milked three times daily, received equal treatment  
10 regarding health and fertility and were under responsibility of the same herdsman. Select and  
11 Control cows were managed together and groups retained in the same building when housed.  
12 Young stock from all groups were managed together and fully housed. A selection of traits  
13 and characteristics describing the four dairy production systems is presented in table 1.

14

## 15 *2.2. Data collection*

16

17 The life cycle inventory treated each of the Langhill systems as a whole farm, accounting for  
18 not only the milking herd but replacement animals as well. All farm-derived data were a true  
19 representation of management at CRF, and were summarized as inputs by calendar year.  
20 Livestock populations were categorized by age as follows: cows (lactating or dry cows),  
21 pregnant heifers older than 24 months, heifers aged between 12-24 months, and between 0-12  
22 months. The average population of each livestock age category was determined as the total  
23 number of animal feed days divided by 365. Bull calves were not included in this study. Milk  
24 yield was recorded for individual cows at every thrice daily milking. Data on milk  
25 composition (milk fat and protein) were recorded from samples collected from each cow once



1 a week. Live-weights were recorded daily for cows after every milking and weekly for dry  
2 cows, and replacement stock. Specific diets were fed depending on animals' production  
3 system, age, and stage of pregnancy where appropriate. The formulated TMR was offered  
4 once a day to each group and daily feed intake of individual lactating cows was recorded  
5 using automated HOKO feeding gates (Insentec BV, Marknesse, The Netherlands). Applying  
6 the estimates from Bell et al. (2010), dry matter intake (DMI) of HF cows grazing pasture  
7 was 19.2 kg day<sup>-1</sup> for Control and 20.8 kg day<sup>-1</sup> for Select cows. Herbage intake of grazing  
8 cows is difficult to predict. However, the research by Bell et al. (2010) compared several  
9 leading methods for predicting herbage intake, and made robust estimates for Langhill  
10 systems based on the cows' energy balance, selecting a method which minimized uncertainty.  
11 Dried-off cows were initially fed a specific drying-off diet, followed by a transition period  
12 ration for the three weeks prior to predicted calving date. The transition diet comprised one-  
13 third of the lactating cow TMR plus 5 kg of wheat straw. Compositions of the Langhill TMR  
14 formulations are presented in table 2. All young stock were managed together on the same  
15 diet irrespective of their system. A typical diet for young stock, from birth to the pre-calving  
16 transition period, was derived in consultation with the senior dairyman at CRF (Kelly, 2010)  
17 and the Farm Management Handbook (Craig and Logan, 2012). Samples of all forages and  
18 rations were collected weekly and analyzed for DM and metabolizable energy (ME) content,  
19 crude protein (CP) content and digestibility.

20 Three forage crops were grown at CRF: ryegrass silage, whole-crop wheat alkalage and  
21 whole-crop maize silage. Ryegrass silage was harvested in three cuts, typically in April, July  
22 and September. Harvest yields from all three crops were retained on farm to be used as  
23 forages for indoor feeding, with additional improved land employed as ryegrass pasture for  
24 grazing. All harvested crops were stored in covered outdoor silage clamps. Dry matter losses  
25 were considered during harvesting (categorized as mechanical, respiration, wilting and

1 leaching losses), ensiling (surface, effluent and invisible losses) and unloading (mechanical  
2 losses) of forages (Bastiman and Altman, 1985; MacDonald et al., 1991). Average crop  
3 yields and on-farm land use over the period are presented in table 3. A combination of animal  
4 manure and manufactured fertilizers was applied to crops, in common with conventional  
5 farming system practice. Manure was applied via slurry injection, while purchased fertilizers  
6 applied included urea, ammonium nitrate and a range of NPK fertilizers. The average annual  
7 application of purchased nitrogen over the period is presented in table 3. Animal manures  
8 were managed as either liquid storage, solid storage or deposition at pasture. Liquid system  
9 manure was contained in a reservoir underneath the main steading before pumping into  
10 storage in two uncovered outdoor slurry tanks, while solid manure was collected daily in an  
11 uncovered outdoor store. All stored slurry and manure was subsequently retained on-farm  
12 and applied to land as manure fertilizer. All manure from milking parlour, and from the  
13 continually housed LF milking cows was transferred into a liquid slurry storage system. The  
14 proportion of manure from HF cows collected in liquid storage or deposited at pasture was  
15 relative to the amount of time spent grazing. All young stock, dry and transition cows were  
16 fully housed, and their manure was managed as solid storage farm yard manure (FYM).  
17 Electricity invoices were obtained from CRF for the period, and all tractors and other farm  
18 machinery ran on red diesel. Average data covering the livestock inputs, energy use and  
19 production level of the different systems are presented in table 4.

20

### 21 *2.3. Life Cycle Assessment*

22

#### 23 2.3.1 Goal and Scope Definition

24

1 The boundary of the current LCA was defined as from ‘cradle to farm gate’ (BSI, 2011),  
2 covering the stages from the extraction or acquisition of raw materials up to the point at  
3 which the product milk left the farm. A flow diagram displaying the on- and off-farm  
4 processes included within the LCA boundary is presented in figure 1. The study did not  
5 therefore account for the subsequent processing and transport of consumer dairy products.  
6 However, this approach was appropriate because 80% of dairy product GHG emissions are  
7 associated with the production phase (Yan et al., 2011), and the product raw milk from the  
8 four systems was treated equally in post-farm processing. The study did not take account of  
9 capital goods, such as the purchase and upkeep of buildings, machinery and of farm  
10 personnel. Inputs such as medicines, seeds, detergents and disinfectant were excluded  
11 because of their minimal impact upon the system (Cederberg, 1998). No account was made of  
12 carbon sequestration or loss resulting from land-use change in this study. The time frame of  
13 each assessment was one calendar year, removing any influence of seasonality.  
14 The functional unit in this study was ‘one kg of energy corrected milk (ECM) leaving the  
15 farm gate’. Following Sjuanja et al. (1990), the equation used in this study was:

$$16 \quad \text{ECM (kg)} = 0.25M + 12.2F + 7.7P$$

17 where M = milk yield (kg), F = fat content (kg), P = protein content (kg).

18 All forage crops and manure were retained on the farm, and the value of surplus and culled  
19 livestock was defined to be the only co-product of the systems. Therefore, the International  
20 Dairy Federation (IDF) method of mass allocation between milk yield and sold stock was  
21 employed (IDF, 2010). System-specific allocation values were determined for each system in  
22 each year of the study. The average allocation value to milk was 83% (sd=4%), 88% (2),  
23 81% (5) and 87% (4) for LFC, LFS, HFC, HFS respectively. These figures are noted to be  
24 broadly consistent with the economic value of 85% allocated to milk which has been  
25 employed by several previous studies (including: Cederberg and Mattsson, 2000; Basset-

1 Mens et al., 2005; Saunders and Barber, 2007) and the default value for physical allocation to  
2 milk of 85.6% recommended by the IDF (2010).

3

#### 4 2.3.2 Inventory Analysis

5

6 System specific emissions factors were estimated for enteric methane, methane from  
7 anaerobic fermentation of manure, and animals' excreted waste nitrogen. Daily enteric CH<sub>4</sub>  
8 was estimated using the non-linear equation by Mills et al. (2003) based upon metabolizable  
9 energy intake (MEI). The equation used was:

$$10 \quad \text{CH}_4 \text{ (MJ day}^{-1}\text{)} = 45.98 - 45.98 \exp^{-0.003 \times \text{MEI}}.$$

11 Emissions factors for CH<sub>4</sub> arising from deposition and management of animal manures were  
12 calculated using equations by the IPCC (2006). Excreted nitrogen was determined as the  
13 difference between nitrogen consumed and nitrogen utilized in milk production, growth and  
14 maintenance. Nitrogen consumed was estimated from weekly averages of cows' dry matter  
15 intake (DMI) and weekly feed samples to determine crude protein (CP) content of their diet.

16 Emissions of N<sub>2</sub>O arising from manure management and deposition at pasture, application of  
17 all fertilizers to the soil, and from crop residues, were estimated using IPCC (2006)  
18 equations. Emissions factors employed covered direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions, and indirect N<sub>2</sub>O  
19 emissions from volatilization, leaching and run-off, and direct emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> arising from  
20 applied urea. Coefficients used for emissions associated with the production and delivery of  
21 manufactured fertilizers were sourced from the Carbon Trust Footprint Expert (Carbon Trust,  
22 2010b). Emissions factors employed for the production, delivery and use of energy and fossil  
23 fuels were sourced from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA,  
24 2011). The specific emissions factors employed in this study are presented in table 5.

1 Embedded emissions associated with the production and delivery of purchased feeds were  
2 determined using Footprint Expert (Carbon Trust, 2010a; 2010b). Allocations were made  
3 between co-products where they existed for imported concentrates, for example between  
4 rapeseed oil and rapeseed meal. These allocations were made according to the mass  
5 allocation values identified by Cederberg and Mattsson (2000), which were similarly  
6 employed by Bell et al. (2011). Allocations of embedded emissions were made as follows for  
7 purchased feed components: sugar beet (66% sugar, 22% beet pulp, 12% molasses); soya  
8 (20% oil, 80% meal, not accounting for land use change); rapeseed (40% oil, 60% meal). A  
9 breakdown of estimated land use and emissions embedded in purchased feed blends for High  
10 forage (HF) and Low forage (LF) rations is presented in table 6.

11

### 12 2.3.3 Impact Assessment

13

14 Environmental impact assessment was conducted using a modified version of the SAC  
15 Carbon Calculator (SAC Rural Business Unit, 2011), designed specifically for use in the  
16 Scottish agricultural sector and implementing IPCC Tier 2 methods (IPCC, 2006). Liaising  
17 closely with the developer, this study was able to implement system specific coefficients for  
18 enteric and manure CH<sub>4</sub> and excreted nitrogen, as well as calculator inputs including energy  
19 use, animal production and feed intake, digestibility and crude protein content. Emissions of  
20 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e for major GHG were calculated using conversion factors for a 100 year time horizon,  
21 defined to be 25 and 298 for CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O respectively (IPCC, 2007). The total GWP was  
22 estimated for each of the four Langhill systems - LFC, LFS, HFC and HFS – for each of  
23 seven full calendar years of the study period.

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### 25 2.4. Statistical Analysis

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The effect of forage regime and genetic line upon the impact category was assessed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) employing a general linear model (GLM) procedure. The model used was:

$$y_{ijk} = \mu + F_i + G_j + (F \times G)_{ij} + A_{ijk} + \varepsilon_{ijk},$$

where  $y_{ijk}$  is the impact category (global warming potential, land use) expressed per kg ECM;  $\mu$  is the overall mean;  $F_i$  is the fixed effect of feeding regime (Low Forage or High Forage);  $G_j$  is the fixed effect of genetic line (Control or Select);  $(F \times G)_{ij}$  is the effect of production system (LFC, LFS, HFC, HFS);  $A_{ijk}$  is the random effect of calendar year (2004-2010);  $\varepsilon_{ijk}$  is the random error term. Significant differences between variables were determined by conducting pairwise comparisons using the Tukey method. All statistical analysis was conducted using Minitab 16.

### 2.5. Sensitivity Analysis

The SAC Carbon Calculator which was employed in this study was a deterministic model, producing a single figure representing the GWP of an agricultural production system for an annual period. A stochastic simulation analysis was therefore conducted in order to assess the effect of statistical uncertainty in IPCC coefficients and system-specific emission factors. Sensitivity Analysis determined which emissions sources, and which specific coefficients within those sources, were contributing the largest uncertainty to the estimated GWP. Uncertainty in this analysis refers to an estimate of imprecision in the result due to the different variation in the inputs, as defined by Basset-Mans et al. (2009). Monte Carlo simulations were performed employing the @Risk package (Palisade Corporation, 2012a) in a similar way as has previously been employed in other dairy studies (e.g. Shalloo et al.,

1 2004; Basset-Mens et al., 2009; Zehetmeier et al., 2014). Mean values for farm input data for  
2 each system were estimated from the life cycle inventory covering the 7 year period of the  
3 study. Probabilistic distributions for inventory emissions factors were applied based on the  
4 uncertainty parameters specified by the source of the coefficient (IPCC, 2006; Carbon Trust,  
5 2010b; DEFRA, 2011). In the absence of information about the shape of the parameters'  
6 distribution, a beta-pert distribution was applied, as demonstrated by Brown et al. (2001).  
7 Employing this distribution preserved any asymmetry in the parameter distribution. The  
8 estimated system-specific coefficients for CH<sub>4</sub> and excreted nitrogen were normally  
9 distributed. Uncertainty in the contribution of enteric CH<sub>4</sub>, estimated using the equation of  
10 Mills et al. (2003), was defined by the range of variation in MEI. The uncertainty parameters  
11 and distributions applied to emissions factors were those presented in Table 5. Monte Carlo  
12 simulations consisting of 10,000 iterations were performed for each of the Langhill systems.  
13 The @RISK procedure employed stepwise multiple regression (Palisade Corporation,  
14 2012b), and determined regression coefficients explaining how much of the observed  
15 uncertainty in the resulting distributions could be attributed to the uncertainty associated with  
16 each contributing emissions source. A normalized multiple regression coefficient of 0  
17 indicated no relationship between the input and output, while a value of 1 or -1 indicated a 1  
18 or -1 standard deviation change in the output for a 1 standard deviation change in the input.  
19 Within each contributing source, regression coefficients were also determined for the  
20 emissions factors listed in table 5, employed in the impact assessment calculations for each  
21 production system.

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### 23 **3. Results**

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#### 25 *3.1. Effect of forage regime and genetic line*

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Results from ANOVA, showing the effect of forage regime and genetic line upon the GWP of contributing sources, are presented in Table 7. All results presented take into account the allocation of emissions between product milk and meat. Results for the effect of forage regime and genetic line upon the on-farm, off-farm and total land requirement are presented in Table 8.

### 3.1.1 Total overall global warming potential

The most GHG efficient system was defined as having the lowest emissions intensity, i.e. lowest GWP per unit ECM. The effect of the interaction was significant and all four production systems were different ( $p < 0.001$ ) from each other. The random effect of year was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) although accounted for a very low proportion of the overall variation. LFS was the most GHG efficient system (least squares mean =  $0.87 \text{ kg CO}_2\text{e kg}^{-1} \text{ ECM}$ , standard error of the mean =  $0.016$ ) ( $p < 0.001$ ). The HFC system had the highest emissions intensity ( $1.14 \text{ kg CO}_2\text{e kg}^{-1} \text{ ECM}$ ). Emissions intensity of LFS was therefore 24% lower than that of HFC. Within a forage regime Select was more efficient than Control, and Low Forage more efficient than High Forage with the same genetic line ( $p < 0.001$ ). Emissions intensity was observed to be 16% lower in Low Forage regime and 9% lower in the Select line ( $p < 0.001$ ). Methane contributed the highest to the overall GWP, comprising 51-52% of the total in all systems. On-farm  $\text{CO}_2$  emissions made the lowest contribution for all systems. In the two HF groups, emissions of  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  (23-24%) contributed more to the overall GWP than the indirect  $\text{CO}_2\text{e}$  (18%) associated with off-farm processes. Off-farm emissions include those embedded in production and delivery of purchased feed, bedding, and manufactured fertilizers. Conversely, for the two LF groups, contribution from off-farm  $\text{CO}_2\text{e}$  (21-22%)



1 was greater than that from N<sub>2</sub>O (19%). Average annual ECM yield per cow was observed to  
2 be 9246, 10753, 7281 and 8189 kg in LFC, LFS, HFC and HFS respectively. Annual milk  
3 yield per cow was 48% higher in LFS than in HFC, representing a difference of over 3000 kg  
4 per cow between the systems. Milk yield per cow was therefore a key factor in this study.

5

### 6 3.1.2 Breakdown of contributing LCA emissions sources

7 The effect of the interaction term was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) on the GWP associated with  
8 fossil fuel use, purchased feed and bedding, enteric methane, and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from  
9 management and application of animal manures. HFS had the lowest GWP per unit milk  
10 associated with fuel use and LFC the highest, while LFS and HFC were not significantly  
11 different. Individually, fossil fuel GWP was 6% higher in Low Forage regime and 6% higher  
12 in the Control line. In terms of the emissions embedded in purchased feed and bedding, HFS  
13 was again the most efficient, with GWP 24% lower than the least efficient LFC. Within a  
14 forage regime the Select line was 8% lower than Control with respect to purchased feed and  
15 bedding, and High Forage was 17% lower than Low Forage. Global warming potential  
16 associated with enteric fermentation was lowest in LFS and 32% higher in HFC. The  
17 individual effects upon GWP of the Low Forage regime and Select genetic line were 16%  
18 and 12% lower respectively in terms of enteric CH<sub>4</sub>. LFS was the most efficient system in  
19 terms of N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from deposition and management of manures. Conversely, HFC  
20 produced 63% more N<sub>2</sub>O from animal manures compared with LFS. Emissions of N<sub>2</sub>O from  
21 animal manures were 30% lower in High Forage regime than Low Forage, and 13% lower in  
22 the Select line.

23

### 24 3.1.3 Individual effects of forage regime and genetic line

25

1 The effect of production system was not significant upon the GWP associated with electricity  
2 use or methane from animal manures. Neither was the term significant for embedded  
3 emissions in production of manufactured fertilizers, N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from applied  
4 manufactured fertilizers, or from crop residues. In these five emissions categories Low  
5 Forage feeding regime was more efficient than High Forage feeding regime (p<0.001).  
6 Amongst these categories, the individual effect of genetic line was only significant for N<sub>2</sub>O  
7 emissions from crop residues, where emissions intensity was 5% lower in Select than  
8 Control. Of the total CH<sub>4</sub> produced, 88% was attributed to enteric fermentation, and this  
9 proportion was consistent across all systems. Off-farm emissions associated with purchased  
10 feed and bedding made the second highest contribution to GWP of the Low Forage regime  
11 (16%), one third greater than the contribution of N<sub>2</sub>O from management and application of  
12 animal manures (12%). In the systems managed under High Forage regime, the embedded  
13 CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions in feed and bedding contributed lower (11%) than those N<sub>2</sub>O emissions  
14 associated with animal manures (14-15%). All emissions associated with manufactured  
15 fertilizer were higher in High Forage regime.

16

#### 17 3.1.4 Land use

18

19 On-farm land use per kg ECM was greater for the HF groups (p<0.01), with HFC requiring  
20 the most farm land (0.98 m<sup>2</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup> ECM) and LFS the least (0.53 m<sup>2</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup> ECM). However, off-  
21 farm land was greater in LF groups, with LFC estimated to require the highest (0.93 m<sup>2</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup>  
22 ECM). Low Forage groups were estimated to require 57% more land off-farm than on-farm  
23 (p<0.01). Conversely, High Forage groups required 40% more land on-farm than off-farm.  
24 Total combined land use, incorporating land used for forages, grazing (where appropriate)  
25 and production of purchased feeds was greater in LF groups (p<0.01). LFC required the

1 highest total land use ( $1.51 \text{ m}^2 \text{ kg}^{-1} \text{ ECM}$ ) to produce 1 kg ECM, followed by HFC, LFS and  
2 HFS (1.39, 1.35 and  $1.21 \text{ m}^2 \text{ kg}^{-1} \text{ ECM}$ , respectively).

3

### 4 *3.2. Contributions to uncertainty in estimated GWP*

5

#### 6 3.2.1 Uncertainty in GHG emissions sources

7

8 The regression coefficients determined for the defined component LCA categories  
9 contributing to the overall GWP are presented in Table 9. Nitrous oxide emissions associated  
10 with the deposition and management of animal manures was the source contributing the  
11 largest amount of variation in the overall GWP. Regression coefficients for uncertainty due to  
12 manure  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  were considerably higher than those determined for the second highest  
13 contributor, the uncertainty due to variation in enteric  $\text{CH}_4$ . These hotspots were consistent  
14 across all four dairy production systems. In both LFC and LFS, the  $\text{CH}_4$  from animal manures  
15 was the third highest contributor of uncertainty, followed by  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  associated with applied  
16 manufactured fertilizers, and then crop residues. Estimated  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  emissions from  
17 manufactured fertilizers contributed the third largest amount of uncertainty to the total GWP  
18 of both HFC and HFS.

19

#### 20 3.2.2 Key coefficients contributing to uncertainty

21

22 Six coefficients were identified as key parameters contributing the most to the observed  
23 uncertainty in overall GWP:

- 24 i. IPCC coefficient for indirect emissions from volatilized nitrogen ( $\text{EF}_4$ )
- 25 ii. IPCC coefficient for direct  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  emissions ( $\text{EF}_1$ ) from nitrogen input to soil

- 1   iii.   IPCC coefficient for emissions from animals' deposition at pasture ( $EF_{3 \text{ PRP}}$ ) (for
- 2       systems managed under High Forage regime only)
- 3   iv.    System-specific coefficient for excreted nitrogen rates
- 4   v.    System-specific coefficient for  $CH_4$  from enteric fermentation
- 5   vi.   System-specific coefficient for  $CH_4$  from manure management

6 Regression coefficients explaining the contribution of individual of emissions factors to the  
7 categories with the highest uncertainty are presented in table 10. In all four dairy production  
8 systems, the greatest contribution to uncertainty in  $N_2O$  emissions from deposition and  
9 management of animal manures arose from  $EF_4$ , concerning indirect emissions from the  
10 volatilization of nitrogen. This coefficient was thus the dominant emissions factor in the  
11 category contributing the most uncertainty in the overall GWP, with system-specific excreted  
12 nitrogen coefficients making the second highest contribution. The IPCC coefficient for direct  
13  $N_2O$  emissions ( $EF_1$ ) was the dominant parameter in contributing to the uncertainty in GWP  
14 from applied fertilizers and manures, and also from crop residues. In two systems (HFC and  
15 HFS), the factor for  $N_2O$  emissions from excreta deposited on pasture by grazing animals  
16 ( $EF_{3 \text{ PRP}}$ ) also contributed a large amount of the uncertainty within the  $N_2O$  from animal  
17 manures category. The influence of this emissions factor was not applicable to the two Low  
18 Forage systems.

19

## 20 **4. Discussion**

21

### 22 *4.1. Effect of forage regime and genetic line on GWP*

23

#### 24 4.1.1 Emissions intensity of dairy production systems

25

1 The four dairy production systems in this study represent contrasting approaches to dairy  
2 herd management, and reflect a range of possible dairy systems. The results for the estimated  
3 GWP of the four Langhill systems are broadly in line with figures found in the literature for a  
4 conventional temperate European dairy production system (Thomassen et al., 2008; van der  
5 Werf et al., 2009). All four Langhill systems were estimated to have a lower GWP than the  
6 British average, estimated to be 1.31 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e kg<sup>-1</sup>ECM in the recent national study covering  
7 415 dairy farms (DairyCo, 2012). This is likely due in part to the higher than average milk  
8 production of the Langhill herd, as well as a lower than average use of manufactured  
9 fertilizers. Farms in the national study will also have employed a range of different feeding  
10 regimes, diets, sources of feeds, and animal management into later lactations. Further, the  
11 DairyCo study calculations used national data sources, allocation techniques and emissions  
12 factors compliant with PAS:2050.

13

14 Basset-Mens (2008) noted that the strength of drawing direct comparisons between the results  
15 of different studies at dairy systems level has in the past been questionable. As the four  
16 systems were managed within the boundaries of the same farm, the results can confidently be  
17 directly compared to each other. These results suggest that there is potential to reduce the  
18 GWP per unit milk yield of a typical conventional dairy system by up to 24%. By improving  
19 the genetic merit alone, a dairy herd could potentially implement 9% reduction in emissions  
20 intensity. Genetic improvement is a relatively cost effective means by which to achieve  
21 reductions in GHG emissions, as the effect is cumulative and permanent (Bell et al., 2012b).  
22 Improvement of this nature necessarily proceeds gradually through breeding and would  
23 realistically take several years to return results. Once established, however, in the Langhill  
24 herd the higher genetic merit delivered an 18% increase in milk yield and contributed  
25 significantly to lowering overall emissions intensity. Similarly, results suggest that switching

1 to the Low Forage regime holds potential for a reduction in GWP of up to 16% per unit milk.  
2 These results in the present study agree with the findings of previous studies (Casey and  
3 Holden, 2005; Garnsworthy et al., 2012), who found that improving the milk yield of the herd  
4 would significantly reduce enteric CH<sub>4</sub> emissions and overall emissions per unit milk.  
5 Furthermore, the results of this study confirm that implementing the Low Forage regime  
6 reduced GWP per kg milk irrespective of cows' genetic merit.

7

#### 8 4.1.2 Balance of enteric methane versus lost nitrogen

9

10 The key to reducing the overall GWP at system level lies in understanding where trade-offs  
11 arise in the dynamic nature of GHG production in dairy systems. Chagunda et al. (2009)  
12 showed that in dairy systems with low enteric CH<sub>4</sub> per unit milk had high excreted nitrogen  
13 and hence increased emissions from animal manures. Overall enteric CH<sub>4</sub> production was  
14 higher per cow in Low Forage regime, owing to the higher metabolizable energy (ME)  
15 content of the feed. Similarly, total enteric CH<sub>4</sub> was greater in the Select groups, attributed to  
16 higher DMI and thus higher MEI. However, high total enteric CH<sub>4</sub> was offset by the greater  
17 milk yield associated with Select genetic line and Low Forage diet. These results are  
18 consistent with the findings of Chagunda et al. (2009) and Bell et al. (2010). Further, the  
19 results from the current study showed that emissions from deposition and management of  
20 animal manures were lowest per unit milk for the highest yielding system. The HFC system  
21 produced 63% more N<sub>2</sub>O per kg ECM from animal manures compared with LFS. The key to  
22 this difference lies in the different management practices under which animal manures were  
23 treated, and their different associated levels of emissions. Under the Low Forage regime,  
24 100% of the fully housed lactating cows' excreta was stored under anaerobic conditions as  
25 liquid slurry. The default IPCC emissions factor for direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from animal

1 manures ( $EF_3$ ), when maintained in liquid storage without a crust as practiced at CRF, is zero  
2 (IPCC, 2006). In contrast, lactating High Forage cows spent an average of 148 (sd=15) days  
3 annually at pasture, where the emissions factor for deposition of animal manures ( $EF_{3PRP}$ ) is  
4 0.02 kg  $N_2O$ -N per kg nitrogen deposited (IPCC, 2006). This factor is also four times higher  
5 than 0.005 kg  $N_2O$ -N per kg stipulated for solid storage of farm manure. Thus under the High  
6 Forage regime, a lower rate of excreted lost nitrogen per cow resulted in higher emissions  
7 intensity from animal manures than under Low Forage.

8

#### 9 4.1.3 Land use requirements and purchased feeds

10

11 Despite the differences in feed intake and ration composition among the dairy production  
12 systems, the overall on-farm forage crop requirements and hence the overall forage crop land  
13 requirements, were comparable. Although a large proportion of the High Forage TMR was  
14 from homegrown silages, the ration was only fed during periods when cows were not grazing.  
15 In contrast, in the Low Forage management regime, cows were provided with a low  
16 proportion of homegrown forages in the TMR throughout the year. However, when on-farm  
17 land use was expressed per kg ECM, the requirements were 0.59, 0.53, 0.98 and 0.88  $m^2 kg^{-1}$   
18 <sup>1</sup>ECM for LFC, LFS, HFC and HFS, respectively. High Forage regime was estimated to  
19 require on average 0.37  $m^2$  more on-farm land per kg ECM than Low Forage regime. As  
20 forage crop land was comparable across systems, this difference was therefore almost  
21 exclusively due to grazing land needed for lactating cows in High Forage. Select line was  
22 also estimated to require 0.08  $m^2 kg^{-1}$  ECM more than Control, due to a higher feed intake.  
23 On-farm land use by the dairy production system was a key difference in the higher  
24 manufactured fertilizer  $N_2O$  emissions estimated for High Forage regimes. Low forage  
25 groups. Further, on-farm land not required for pasture under Low Forage could be employed

1 by the in an environmental scheme for woodland sequestration or energy crops, contributing  
2 to further lower GWP of the dairy production system. Low Forage regime required more off-  
3 farm land, and more land overall compared to High Forage. Land use requirement under Low  
4 Forage was therefore inherently tied to the efficiency of crop production at national or even  
5 international level. This is particularly relevant to the global dairy industry in the case of  
6 South American production of soyabeans, where further off-farm emissions may also arise  
7 from the conversion of forest to productive agricultural land (Flysjo et al., 2012).

8 The emissions intensity associated with purchased feeds was 20% higher in Low Forage than  
9 in High Forage groups. Considering the high proportion of purchased feeds in the Low  
10 Forage ration, the difference between the two management regimes was lower than expected.  
11 This can partly be explained by the emissions intensity being offset by high milk yield in the  
12 Low Forage groups. However, the emissions factor for by-product grain was 0.030 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e  
13 per kg of grain, compared with 0.375 and 0.360 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per kg of directly sourced wheat and  
14 barley respectively (Carbon Trust, 2010a). Thus the inclusion of by-products in the cows'  
15 ration led to lower embedded emissions than if all purchased feeds had been directly  
16 produced for animal consumption. The sourcing of by-product feeds was a key aspect of  
17 reducing emissions intensity in a Low Forage system. However, it is important to consider  
18 that if an increasing number of dairy systems switch to sourcing by-product feeds, demand  
19 may eventually exceed supply. The Low Forage regime is therefore more sensitive to any  
20 changes in the by-product market. Bell et al (2012a) noted that a growth in bio-ethanol  
21 production could lead to greater availability and competitive pricing of by-products for  
22 farmers. Security of supply will improve the future sustainability of the Low Forage regime  
23 which may even enable a higher inclusion of by-products in the diet, further reducing on- and  
24 off-farm feed production emissions. However, implementing a Low Forage ration comprising  
25 a different ratio or combination of purchased feed components could change the scale of



1 emissions intensities identified. Henriksson et al. (2011) noted that purchased animal feeds,  
2 for example barley, may differ in how and where it was cultivated, transported and processed  
3 in the feed industry. Thus when making comparisons between different studies, the GHG  
4 associated with the same purchased feed components may differ.

5

## 6 *4.2. Uncertainty in estimated GWP*

7

### 8 4.2.1 Key parameters contributing to uncertainty

9

10 Sources contributing the most uncertainty to results were N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from management  
11 of manures, and enteric fermentation. This is broadly concurrent with Basset-Mens et al.  
12 (2009) and Flysjö et al, (2011) who found that, in similar analyses, the key parameter  
13 contributing the highest uncertainty was the emissions factor for direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from  
14 excreta deposited directly on grazing (EF<sub>3PRP</sub>), followed by CH<sub>4</sub> emissions from enteric  
15 fermentation. In a study of grazing systems in multiple locations, Lovett et al. (2008) found  
16 that the contribution to uncertainty from estimated N<sub>2</sub>O was always greater than for CH<sub>4</sub>.  
17 Both Basset-Mens et al. (2009) and Flysjö et al, (2011) employed a NZ specific emissions  
18 factor for deposition at pasture, 50% lower than the IPCC default value, however this factor  
19 still produced the highest uncertainty in their respective studies. Within the N<sub>2</sub>O emissions  
20 from animal manures in the present study, however, the coefficient governing indirect  
21 emissions from volatilized nitrogen (EF<sub>4</sub>) was the dominant factor. Under High Forage  
22 regime, EF<sub>3PRP</sub> contributed the next greatest amount of variation to emissions from manures  
23 after EF<sub>4</sub> and the system specific nitrogen excretion rate. In the present study, average annual  
24 grazing under High Forage regime was 148 (sd=15) full days at grass over the period. The  
25 EF<sub>3PRP</sub> parameter was not applicable to Low Forage regime as no animals were permitted to

1 graze pasture. Difference between the studies can be explained by the observation that  
2 Basset-Mens et al. (2009) based their analysis on an extensive grazing-based NZ dairy  
3 production system, with greater proportion of time at pasture but lower nitrogen excretion  
4 rate per cow and lower application of both stored manures and manufactured fertilizer.

5

#### 6 4.2.2 Minimizing level of uncertainty

7

8 The overall range in estimated GWP was greater in High Forage systems, suggesting that  
9 Low Forage systems were less susceptible to influence of high uncertainty in emissions  
10 factors. This is supported by Gibbons et al. (2006), who stated that switching high yielding  
11 cows to a higher concentrate, less grass-based diet to reduce emissions was robust to  
12 uncertainty in GHG emissions. Although enteric fermentation contributed the most (44-47%)  
13 to the total GWP in all systems, this source did not contribute the most uncertainty overall.  
14 Enteric CH<sub>4</sub> had an emissions intensity three times greater than N<sub>2</sub>O from animal manures  
15 under the High Forage regime, and four times greater under Low Forage regime, yet animal  
16 manure emissions made a larger contribution to the overall uncertainty. This goes to highlight  
17 that, for as much as a LCA method may seek to minimize the variation in its farm inventory  
18 data, a greater and unavoidable component of the uncertainty in LCA results will arise from  
19 employing standardized emissions factors. The IPCC coefficient for indirect emissions from  
20 volatilized nitrogen (EF<sub>4</sub>) was the dominant factor in the emissions category contributing  
21 most to overall uncertainty. The coefficient for direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from nitrogen applied to  
22 soil (EF<sub>1</sub>) was also a dominant factor for all systems. In a study involving a comparable  
23 system (fully housed, Holstein Friesian cows, TMR with grass and maize silage and  
24 concentrates, farm gate LCA boundary), Zehetmeier et al. (2014) reported that nitrogen input  
25 to soil (EF<sub>1</sub>) had the highest impact on uncertainty in GHG. The coefficient for deposition at

1 pasture ( $EF_{3PRP}$ ) was a key contributor for High Forage systems. The uncertainty range for  
2  $EF_4$  stated in the literature amounts to a factor of 25, while uncertainties in  $EF_1$  and  $EF_{3PRP}$   
3 range by a factor of 10 and by around 8.5 respectively (IPCC, 2006). These standardized  
4 emissions factors necessarily contain a large uncertainty range as they aspire to be  
5 representative of the range of natural variability and physical conditions found on a national  
6 scale. In the present study, system-specific enteric  $CH_4$  emissions factors by contrast were  
7 noted to have a coefficient of variation of around 7-10% across all systems. This would seem  
8 to illustrate a further advantage of employing the system-specific emissions factors in the  
9 present study or, more generally, employing Tier 3 values where possible in the LCA of dairy  
10 production systems. Conversely, it has been reported that statistical models which correlate  
11 nutrient intake with  $CH_4$  production can vary widely where predictions are obtained for  
12 breeds, type of diet, nutrient intakes and environments outside those used in model  
13 construction (Mills et al., 2003; Boadi et al., 2004). However, the specific enteric  $CH_4$   
14 equation employed in the present study was previously determined to be most suitable for use  
15 in the Langhill herd, satisfying the range of production traits and diets, following a  
16 comparison of 22 equations in the literature (Bell et al., 2009). The IPCC note that variation  
17 introduced by any Tier 3 emissions factors employed is likely to be minimized, while  
18 uncertainties introduced by standardized emission factors are likely to dominate (IPCC,  
19 2006). Lovett et al. (2008) also found that the coefficient of variation for enteric  $CH_4$  was  
20 much lower than those for  $N_2O$  related emissions factors covering nitrogen leaching or  
21 applied fertilizers. Thus after many studies have gone to lengths to define and standardize the  
22 LCA methods, perhaps the most crucial aspect for confidence in LCA results in the future lies  
23 with narrowing the uncertainty parameters surrounding emissions factors, and developing  
24 countries' respective Tier 2 and Tier 3 coefficients. The present study suggests that increased  
25 definition of the inventory coefficients  $EF_1$  and  $EF_4$  would increase confidence in the

1 estimated GWP of all dairy production systems, while minimizing uncertainty in EF<sub>3</sub> would  
2 improve confidence in LCA results for those systems which involve grazing pasture.

3

#### 4 **5. Conclusions**

5

6 This study found that the LFS system, where high genetic merit cows were managed under a  
7 Low Forage regime, had the lowest emissions intensity with respect to greenhouse gas  
8 emissions per unit of milk production. LFS was estimated to hold potential to reduce  
9 emissions intensity by 24% compared to average genetic merit cows managed under a High  
10 Forage regime. Individually, improving genetic merit of the herd and implementing Low  
11 Forage regime hold potential to reduce emissions intensity by 9% and 16% respectively. Key  
12 factors in the differences amongst systems were greater off-farm emissions under Low  
13 Forage regime, and greater on-farm nitrous oxide emissions associated with High Forage. In  
14 Low Forage groups, high overall emissions were matched with increased productivity, but  
15 this was not the case for the more extensive High Forage groups.

16 Three IPCC coefficients relating to nitrous oxide emissions (EF<sub>1</sub>, EF<sub>4</sub>, and EF<sub>3 PRP</sub>), and  
17 system-specific emissions factors concerning cows' excreted nitrogen rate, enteric  
18 fermentation and manure methane, contributed the greatest uncertainty in results. The IPCC  
19 coefficients for direct atmospheric N<sub>2</sub>O emissions (EF<sub>1</sub>), indirect emissions from volatilized  
20 nitrogen (EF<sub>4</sub>), and emissions from deposition at pasture (EF<sub>3 PRP</sub>) should be prioritized for  
21 better definition in order to minimize uncertainty in future studies.

22

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24

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5

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1 **Tables and figures**

2

3 **Table 1**

4 **Langhill dairy production systems described by system characteristics**

Characteristic <sup>b</sup>	Units	Production System <sup>a</sup>							
		LFC		LFS		HFC		HFS	
		mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.
Milk yield	kg cow <sup>-1</sup> day <sup>-1</sup>	29.2	4.45	34.8	4.95	22.9	3.55	26.4	4.46
Milk fat	g kg <sup>-1</sup>	36	7.0	38	7.4	39	6.5	41	7.1
Milk protein	g kg <sup>-1</sup>	31	3.6	33	3.9	32	3.9	33	4.4
Dietary CP	kg cow <sup>-1</sup> day <sup>-1</sup>	3.22	0.32	3.62	0.37	2.94	0.34	3.22	0.38
Calving interval	days	388	53.3	407	72.3	396	57.7	407	72.5
Involuntary cull	%	18	4.5	31	7.7	10	5.0	16	6.2

<sup>a</sup> LFC = Low Forage Control, LFS = Low Forage Select, HFC = High Forage Control, LFS = High Forage Select, and Select = representative of top 5% UK genetic merit for milk fat plus protein, Control = average genetic merit.

<sup>b</sup> CP = crude protein

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8 **Table 2**

9 Total Mixed Ration (TMR) components expressed as percentages (%) of the total formulation offered  
10 to lactating cows under Low Forage and High Forage regime and to dry cows

TMR Component	Low Forage %	High Forage %	Dry Cows %
Ryegrass silage	27.0	45.0	30.0
Wholecrop wheat alkalage	9.0	15.0	10.0
Wholecrop maize silage	9.0	15.0	10.0
Purchased concentrate/blend	53.9	24.2	4.1
Wheat straw	-	-	45.0
Minerals	1.1	0.8	0.9

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**Table 3**

Mean and standard deviation (s.d.) of crop yields, land use and applied purchased nitrogen by Langhill systems<sup>a</sup>

		Grass silage		Maize silage		Wheat Alkalage		Pasture	
		mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.
Crop yield (dry matter)	t ha <sup>-1</sup>	10.3	1.5	11.9	2.1	11.6	2.3	10.3	1.5
Land Use	ha								
LFC		18.1	4.0	4.0	0.8	3.2	0.7		
LFS		18.0	4.2	4.2	0.7	3.4	0.9		
HFC		18.2	4.1	4.1	0.9	3.3	0.7	11.9	2.8
HFS		18.2	4.2	4.2	0.8	3.4	0.8	12.2	3.0
Purchased N applied	kg								
LFC		2740	393	47	26	224	84		
LFS		2716	276	51	26	230	75		
HFC		3083	777	48	24	239	102	876	464
HFS		2993	789	49	22	244	97	912	486

<sup>a</sup> LFC = Low Forage Control, LFS = Low Forage Select, HFC = High Forage Control, LFS = High Forage Select

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1 **Table 4**  
 2 Averages of annual Life Cycle input data by Langhill production system for livestock, energy use and animal production data

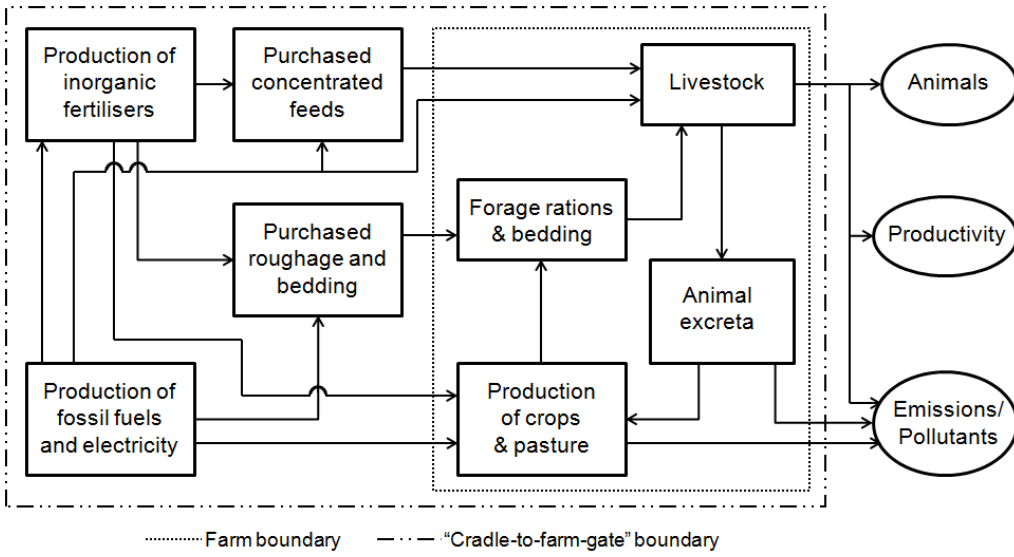
Input <sup>b</sup>	Units	Dairy Production System <sup>a</sup>								
		LFC		LFS		HFC		HFS		
		mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	
Livestock										
Cows	n	47	4.1	43	5.6	50	5.9	48	5.6	
LW	kg cow <sup>-1</sup>	632	16.3	651	13.0	605	14.7	630	10.7	
DMI	kg cow <sup>-1</sup> day <sup>-1</sup>	18.0	1.02	20.2	1.24	18.1	0.65	19.1	0.45	
MEI	MJ cow <sup>-1</sup> day <sup>-1</sup>	210	12.0	236	15.0	184	9.5	201	7.7	
N intake	g cow <sup>-1</sup> day <sup>-1</sup>	515	16.8	580	24.6	469	17.6	515	12.1	
Energy use										
Diesel	l	8347	2305	8387	2426	7230	2058	7162	2129	
Electricity	MWh	19.3	2.0	21.8	3.8	19.4	1.7	21.6	2.9	
Animal production										
MY	t	429	43.9	485	84.4	381	33.9	424	56.2	
F	t	15.3	1.61	18.5	3.53	14.6	1.00	17.1	2.06	
P	t	13.5	1.11	16.2	2.84	12.1	1.05	14.2	1.95	
DW	t	6.3	2.26	4.7	0.91	6.5	2.90	4.7	2.27	

<sup>a</sup> LFC = Low Forage Control, LFS = Low Forage Select, HFC = High Forage Control, LFS = High Forage Select, where Select = representative of top 5% UK genetic merit for milk fat plus protein, and Control = average genetic merit.

<sup>b</sup> Cows = average no. cows in herd, LW = liveweight, DMI= dry matter intake, MEI = metabolizable energy intake, N = nitrogen, MY = total annual milk yield, F = milk fat, P = milk protein, DW = combined deadweight of sold livestock at 50% killout

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**Figure. 1.** Flow diagram showing farm and 'cradle-to-farm-gate' boundaries for product life cycle of Langhill dairy production systems

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**Table 5**

Emissions factors with default values, uncertainty parameters and probabilistic distributions applied for sensitivity analysis

Factor	Description	Units	Default	Range	Distribution
EF <sub>1</sub>	<sup>a</sup> Direct from applied fertilizer to soil	kgN <sub>2</sub> O-N kgN <sup>-1</sup>	0.01	0.003-0.03	Beta
EF <sub>4</sub>	<sup>a</sup> Volatilization, atmospheric deposition of nitrogen	kgN <sub>2</sub> O-N kgN <sup>-1</sup>	0.01	0.002-0.05	Beta
EF <sub>5</sub>	<sup>a</sup> Leaching and run-off	kgN <sub>2</sub> O-N kgN <sup>-1</sup>	0.0075	0.0005-0.025	Beta
Frac <sub>LEACH</sub>	<sup>a</sup> % lost from leaching	%	30	10-80	Beta
EF <sub>3 PRP</sub>	<sup>a</sup> Direct from deposition of cows' excreta at pasture	kgN <sub>2</sub> O-N kgN <sup>-1</sup>	0.02	0.007-0.06	Beta
Frac <sub>GASM</sub>	<sup>a</sup> Volatilization from animal excreta at pasture	%	20	5-50	Beta
Frac <sub>GASF</sub>	<sup>a</sup> Volatilization from applied fertilizers	%	10	3-30	Beta
EF <sub>3 SS</sub>	<sup>a</sup> Direct from solid storage of animal manure	kgN <sub>2</sub> O-N kgN <sup>-1</sup>	0.005	0.0025-0.01	Beta
Frac <sub>SSV</sub>	<sup>a</sup> Volatilization from solid storage of animal manure	%	30	10-40	Beta
EF <sub>3 LS</sub>	<sup>a</sup> Direct from liquid storage of animal manure	kgN <sub>2</sub> O-N kgN <sup>-1</sup>	0	0	-
Frac <sub>LSV</sub>	<sup>a</sup> Volatilization from liquid storage of animal manure	%	40	15-45	Beta
EF <sub>1CR</sub>	<sup>a</sup> Direct from crop residues	kgN <sub>2</sub> O-N kgN <sup>-1</sup>	0.01	0.003-0.03	Beta
EF <sub>urea</sub>	<sup>a</sup> Direct emissions from applied urea	kgCO <sub>2</sub> -C kgUrea <sup>-1</sup>	0.2	0.0-0.2	Triangular
EF <sub>Nex</sub>	<sup>b</sup> Excreted Nitrogen	kgN cow <sup>-1</sup> year <sup>-1</sup>	Specific to system and age		Normal
EF <sub>ent</sub>	<sup>b</sup> Enteric methane	kgCH <sub>4</sub> cow <sup>-1</sup> year <sup>-1</sup>	Specific to system and age		Normal
EF <sub>man</sub>	<sup>b</sup> Manure methane	kgCH <sub>4</sub> cow <sup>-1</sup> year <sup>-1</sup>	Specific to system and age		Normal
EF <sub>N</sub>	<sup>c</sup> Production of nitrogen	kgCO <sub>2</sub> e kgN <sup>-1</sup>	7.11	6.85-7.37	Beta
EF <sub>P</sub>	<sup>c</sup> Production of phosphate	kgCO <sub>2</sub> e kgP <sup>-1</sup>	1.85	1.61-2.09	Beta
EF <sub>K</sub>	<sup>c</sup> Production of potash	kgCO <sub>2</sub> e kgK <sup>-1</sup>	1.76	1.61-1.91	Beta
EF <sub>diesel</sub>	<sup>d</sup> Associated with red diesel	kgCO <sub>2</sub> e l <sup>-1</sup>	3.176	2.818-3.533	Beta
EF <sub>petrol</sub>	<sup>d</sup> Associated with petrol	kgCO <sub>2</sub> e l <sup>-1</sup>	2.667	2.368-3.065	Beta
EF <sub>elec</sub>	<sup>d</sup> Associated with electricity	kgCO <sub>2</sub> e kWh <sup>-1</sup>	0.594	0.582-0.605	Normal

<sup>a</sup>IPCC (2006)

<sup>b</sup>System-specific calculations

<sup>c</sup>Carbon Trust (2010b)/NEA (2011)

<sup>d</sup>DEFRA (2011)

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2 **Table 6**

3 Breakdown of estimated land use and emissions embedded in purchased feed blends for High forage (HF) and Low forage (LF) rations

Purchased component	Whole crop		Proportion in blend		Land use per kg feed blend		Emissions per kg feed blend	
	Dry matter yield <sup>a</sup>	Embedded emissions <sup>b</sup>	LF	HF	LF	HF	LF	HF
	t ha <sup>-1</sup>	gCO <sub>2</sub> e kg <sup>-1</sup>	%		m <sup>2</sup> kg <sup>-1</sup>		gCO <sub>2</sub> e kg <sup>-1</sup>	
Barley distillery grain	5.9	30		33.3		0.43		10.0
Wheat distillery grain	7.0	30	13	33.3	0.18	0.43	3.9	10.0
Wheat	7.0	354	34		0.46		118.0	
Sugar beet pulp	10.0	30	28		0.06		8.4	
Soyabean meal <sup>c</sup>	3.0	220	25		0.75		56.8	
Rapeseed meal	3.9	400		33.3		0.70		133.3
Complete blend					1.44	1.55	187.0	153.3

<sup>a</sup> Average whole crop yields derived from: Craig & Logan (2012), Scottish Government (2012), DEFRA (2011b)

<sup>b</sup> Carbon Trust (2010a)

<sup>c</sup> Value for soya land use from Nielsen et al. (2003). Assumed sourced from Brazil, excludes land use change.

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1 **Table 7**

2 Breakdown of results from Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)<sup>a</sup>, showing Global Warming Potential (GWP) per kilogram energy corrected milk (ECM),  
 3 attributed to contributing categories of Life Cycle Assessment

Variable	Level <sup>b</sup>	Fossil	Electricity	Manufactured	Purchased	Enteric	Animal	Animal	Manufactured	Crop	Total
		fuels	CO <sub>2</sub>	fertilizer	feed &	fermentation	manures	manures	fertilizer	residues	Overall
		CO <sub>2</sub>	CO <sub>2</sub>	production	bedding	CH <sub>4</sub>	CH <sub>4</sub>	N <sub>2</sub> O	N <sub>2</sub> O	N <sub>2</sub> O	GWP
		CO <sub>2</sub>	CO <sub>2</sub>	CO <sub>2</sub> e	CO <sub>2</sub> e	CH <sub>4</sub>	CH <sub>4</sub>	N <sub>2</sub> O	N <sub>2</sub> O	N <sub>2</sub> O	CO <sub>2</sub> e
Production system (F×G)	LFC	0.051 <sup>a</sup>	0.022	0.048	0.154 <sup>a</sup>	0.451 <sup>c</sup>	0.052	0.119 <sup>a</sup>	0.036	0.030	0.963 <sup>c</sup>
	LFS	0.048 <sup>b</sup>	0.024	0.045	0.143 <sup>b</sup>	0.393 <sup>d</sup>	0.049	0.103 <sup>b</sup>	0.034	0.028	0.866 <sup>d</sup>
	HFC	0.048 <sup>b</sup>	0.025	0.074	0.129 <sup>c</sup>	0.518 <sup>a</sup>	0.074	0.168 <sup>c</sup>	0.056	0.044	1.136 <sup>a</sup>
	HFS	0.046 <sup>c</sup>	0.026	0.071	0.118 <sup>d</sup>	0.462 <sup>b</sup>	0.073	0.148 <sup>d</sup>	0.053	0.042	1.040 <sup>b</sup>
	sem	0.0008	0.0008	0.0032	0.0030	0.0094	0.0027	0.0031	0.0024	0.0005	0.0163
Forage regime (F)	Low (LF)	0.049 <sup>a</sup>	0.023 <sup>b</sup>	0.046 <sup>b</sup>	0.149 <sup>a</sup>	0.422 <sup>b</sup>	0.051 <sup>b</sup>	0.111 <sup>a</sup>	0.035 <sup>a</sup>	0.029 <sup>b</sup>	0.914 <sup>b</sup>
	High (HF)	0.047 <sup>b</sup>	0.026 <sup>a</sup>	0.073 <sup>a</sup>	0.124 <sup>b</sup>	0.490 <sup>a</sup>	0.073 <sup>a</sup>	0.158 <sup>b</sup>	0.055 <sup>b</sup>	0.043 <sup>a</sup>	1.088 <sup>a</sup>
	sem	0.0006	0.0005	0.0027	0.0020	0.0067	0.0019	0.0020	0.0017	0.0004	0.0116
Genetic line (G)	Control (C)	0.049 <sup>a</sup>	0.024	0.061	0.142 <sup>a</sup>	0.484 <sup>a</sup>	0.063	0.144 <sup>a</sup>	0.046	0.037 <sup>a</sup>	1.049 <sup>a</sup>
	Select (S)	0.047 <sup>b</sup>	0.025	0.058	0.131 <sup>b</sup>	0.428 <sup>b</sup>	0.061	0.125 <sup>b</sup>	0.043	0.035 <sup>b</sup>	0.953 <sup>b</sup>
	sem	0.0006	0.0005	0.0027	0.0020	0.0067	0.0019	0.0021	0.0017	0.0004	0.0116
R <sup>2</sup> value		0.94	0.95	0.89	0.87	0.85	0.88	0.94	0.89	0.97	0.91

4 <sup>a</sup> All results presented as least squares means (lsm) with standard errors of the mean (sem), and expressed in terms of kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalents per kilogram  
 5 Energy Corrected Milk (kg CO<sub>2</sub>e kg ECM<sup>-1</sup>). Different superscripts within a column denote significant differences between levels of same variables (p<0.001).

6 <sup>b</sup> LFC = Low Forage Control, LFS = Low Forage Select, HFC = High Forage Control, LFS = High Forage Select

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**Table 8**

Results from Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)<sup>a</sup> showing land use per kilogram of Energy Corrected Milk (ECM)

Variable	Level <sup>b</sup>	Land Use <sup>a</sup>		
		On-farm m <sup>2</sup> kgECM <sup>-1</sup>	Off-farm m <sup>2</sup> kgECM <sup>-1</sup>	Total land m <sup>2</sup> kgECM <sup>-1</sup>
Production system (FxG)	LFC	0.59 <sup>b</sup>	0.93 <sup>a</sup>	1.51 <sup>a</sup>
	LFS	0.53 <sup>b</sup>	0.82 <sup>a</sup>	1.35 <sup>b</sup>
	HFC	0.98 <sup>a</sup>	0.41 <sup>b</sup>	1.39 <sup>b</sup>
	HFS	0.88 <sup>a</sup>	0.33 <sup>b</sup>	1.21 <sup>c</sup>
	sem	0.037	0.047	0.073
Forage regime (F)	Low (LF)	0.56 <sup>b</sup>	0.88 <sup>a</sup>	1.43 <sup>a</sup>
	High (HF)	0.93 <sup>a</sup>	0.37 <sup>b</sup>	1.30 <sup>b</sup>
	sem	0.037	0.037	0.017
Genetic line (G)	Control (C)	0.78 <sup>a</sup>	0.67 <sup>a</sup>	1.45 <sup>a</sup>
	Select (S)	0.70 <sup>b</sup>	0.58 <sup>b</sup>	1.28 <sup>b</sup>
	sem	0.012	0.014	0.013
<b>R<sup>2</sup> value</b>		<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>0.78</b>

<sup>a</sup> All results presented as least squares means (lsm) with standard errors of the mean (sem). Different superscripts within a column denote significant differences between levels of same variables (p<0.01).

<sup>b</sup> LFC = Low Forage Control, LFS = Low Forage Select, HFC = High Forage Control, LFS = High Forage Select

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**Table 9**

Regression coefficients explaining contribution of variation in each emissions source to uncertainty in estimated overall global warming potential (GWP), with respective ranges in uncertainty<sup>a</sup>

Contributing category variable	Production System <sup>b</sup>											
	LFC			LFS			HFC			HFS		
	Rank	Coeff	Range	Rank	Coeff	Range	Rank	Coeff	Range	Rank	Coeff	Range
N <sub>2</sub> O animal manures	1	0.76	0.39	1	0.74	0.28	1	0.73	0.47	1	0.73	0.44
CH <sub>4</sub> enteric fermentation	2	0.44	0.23	2	0.44	0.20	2	0.44	0.27	2	0.43	0.25
CH <sub>4</sub> animal manures	3	0.32	0.17	3	0.35	0.14	5	0.28	0.17	4	0.31	0.18
N <sub>2</sub> O purchased fertilizer application	4	0.27	0.11	4	0.28	0.09	3	0.34	0.16	3	0.35	0.17
N <sub>2</sub> O crop residues	5	0.24	0.09	5	0.25	0.08	4	0.29	0.14	5	0.29	0.13
CO <sub>2</sub> e fossil fuels	6	0.05	0.02	6	0.05	0.01	6	0.04	0.01	6	0.04	0.01
CO <sub>2</sub> e purchased fertilizer production	7	0.01	0.01	7	0.01	0.01	7	0.02	0.01	7	0.01	0.01
CO <sub>2</sub> e electricity	8	0.01	0.01	8	0.01	0.01	8	0.01	0.01	8	0.01	0.01
<b>Overall GWP</b>			<b>0.50</b>			<b>0.41</b>			<b>0.61</b>			<b>0.67</b>

<sup>a</sup> Range in overall GWP expressed in kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalents per kilogram energy corrected milk

<sup>b</sup> LFC = Low Forage Control, LFS = Low Forage Select, HFC = High Forage Control, LFS = High Forage Select

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1 **Table 10**  
 2 Regression coefficients explaining contribution of variation in emissions factors to uncertainty in  
 3 estimated nitrous oxide emissions from animal manures, applied purchased fertilizers and crop  
 4 residues

Emissions factor <sup>a</sup>	Source of estimated emissions											
	Animal manures				Applied purchased fertilizers				Crop residues			
	LFC	LFS	HFC	HFS	LFC	LFS	HFC	HFS	LFC	LFS	HFC	HFS
EF <sub>1</sub>					0.92	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92
EF <sub>3 PRP</sub>			0.37	0.41								
EF <sub>4</sub>	0.88	0.87	0.75	0.73	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19				
EF <sub>5</sub>	0.18	0.17	0.18	0.18	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30
EF <sub>N ex</sub>	0.29	0.33	0.41	0.44								
EF <sub>SS</sub>	0.15	0.13	0.14	0.12								
Frac <sub>GASF</sub>					0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11				
Frac <sub>GASM</sub>	0.13	0.13	0.14	0.15								
Frac <sub>LEACH</sub>	0.12	0.11	0.12	0.12	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.19	0.23	0.22	0.22	0.22
Frac <sub>LSV</sub>	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.03								
Frac <sub>SSV</sub>	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01								
R <sup>2</sup> value	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99

<sup>a</sup> EF<sub>1</sub> = direct emissions from nitrogen input to soil, EF<sub>3 PRP</sub> = direct from deposition of cows' excreta at pasture, EF<sub>4</sub> = indirect emissions from volatilised N, EF<sub>5</sub> = emissions from leaching and runoff, EF<sub>N ex</sub> = System specific nitrogen excretion rate, EF<sub>SS</sub> = direct from solid storage, Frac<sub>GASF</sub> = % volatilisation from fertiliser, Frac<sub>GASM</sub> = % volatilisation from manures, Frac<sub>LEACH</sub> = % leaching, Frac<sub>LSV</sub> = % volatilisation from liquid storage, Frac<sub>SSV</sub> = % volatilisation from solid storage. Where: LFC = Low Forage Control, LFS = Low Forage Select, HFC = High Forage Control, LFS = High Forage Select

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