

Young competitors

HUNDREDS of young exhibitors and breeders of the future will provide the opener at this year's **National Holstein Show** when they compete in All-Breeds All-Britain Calf Show at Stoneleigh.

The popular show is making a welcome return following the decision to cancel the 2007 event, which usually takes place in October, after it was plagued by movement restrictions caused by foot-and-mouth.

Further disappointment lay ahead as the organisers were then forced to cancel again after bluetongue restrictions affecting key areas made it almost impossible to proceed.

The Holstein UK board decided to postpone the 2008 show so young breeders did not miss another year. The event will follow its usual weekend schedule, beginning with showmanship classes on Saturday, and calf classes on Sunday. It will finish with a presentation later the same afternoon.

Around 23 clubs will participate and representatives from all regions of England, Scotland and

Wales will take part. The Northern Ireland Club will borrow calves from Lancashire.

Holsteins, Dairy Shorthorns, Ayrshires and Jerseys will attend the show, along with the Guernseys, who made their debut appearance in 2006 at the premier event for young handlers and dairy calves.

Judging the Holstein showmanship and calf champion will be Dan Doner from Courtice, Ontario, of the Donlea prefix.

Vicky Ellis, Holstein Young Breeders' co-ordinator, says: "A great deal of preparation is involved and members have to do it themselves, so it is a real challenge.

"This event gives them a great opportunity to compete equally against each other and with competitors as young as eight, it is a show where children start and can compete against equals with no inhibitions."

In order to compete in the calf show, Holstein members were required to compete in qualifying rounds, and have been staging regional heats across the country over the last few months.

