



SUMMER GRAZING ADVICE FOR DAIRY COWS

With the Summer grazing season in full swing, now is the time to check that all is as it should be.

The grazing season in 2024 was strange, due to the changes in the usual weather patterns. We saw some of the lowest protein levels in grazed grass that we have ever seen (some down at 7%). This may have been down to the wet weather in April preventing fertiliser spreading, or that which had been applied was washed off the fields. By contrast, the samples seen so far in 2025 are more “normal”, with protein levels in the high teens and low twenties. Fingers crossed they stay as they should, and it signals a more promising rest of Summer!

However, dairy farmers must still be mindful of other issues.

HOW FAR IS FAR?

An area we have been looking at closely is the distance some cows need to walk to get to the parlour and the impact this might have on production. Cows are heavy and carrying that amount of weight on a long walk can take its toll. For example, if the grazing paddock for that day is a mile away (and we have many examples of this), the journey to the parlour and back, twice in a day, could account for the energy needed for around 2-3 litres of milk – this is quite a cost. On such days, offering an extra 0.5 kg of feed in the parlour for every 0.5 miles could help to offset these losses.

This information is all built in to our rationing software and our Feed Advisors can assess your situation.

MONITOR GRASS QUALITY AND INTAKES

As we all know, grass quality will vary with the prevailing weather conditions and as the season progresses. The work carried out many years ago in Northern Ireland demonstrated quite clearly that cows like to spend around 70% of the daylight hours eating. Therefore, the biggest intake potential is in June and starts to get shorter thereafter, as the daylight hours are lost.

On top of this, the potential of any field or paddock decreases with every round, mainly due to dung splatter. Well-managed field rotations lessen this effect, but it does increase with time and could easily end up with a paddock in September being worth 20% less than in May.

Ensuring there is some silage available to buffer feed the cows when they come into the parlour in September onwards may help to avoid body condition losses in later Summer as cows milk off their backs in a bid to keep milking.

Taking fresh grass samples, at least monthly, will allow dry matter and energy content to be monitored. Ideally, samples should be taken before cows move into paddocks to optimise nutrition.

Grass with over 18% protein may have too much soluble nitrogen for cows to use efficiently. This can result in higher milk urea levels, which can have a detrimental impact on fertility – cows bulling well but not holding to service is a classic sign.

These high protein grasses contain a very high level of metabolisable protein based on the nitrogen fraction (MPN). Choosing a compound feed that has a “reverse ratio” of MPN, such as Massey’s FiMLAC QHS range, can help offset this excess nitrogen coming from grass.



David Wilde
National Ruminant
Technical Manager
07793 835173

PREVENTING HEAT STRESS

We are well aware of the temperature increases in recent years. Even in the UK, heat stress can become a risk at these higher temperatures, especially if humidity is also very high.

Even though grass comprises 80% water, grazing cows producing 30 litres still need to drink 60-80 litres of water. This could easily increase by 50% in really hot conditions. Remember, the temperatures in the forecast are in the shade – not what is on the cows’ backs!

Therefore, it is essential cows have access to plentiful supplies of fresh, clean water with enough pressure! Ideally, all paddocks will have some shade to provide some cover when it is exceptionally hot (or throwing it down with rain).

For more information and a bespoke ration plan, please speak with your Massey Feed Specialist.



FARMING THOUGHTS

March was extremely dry, with all areas recording below-average rainfall.

April was the sunniest on record and the third warmest, with parts of the Midlands and North East England receiving less than one-fifth of average April rainfall. These dry conditions have continued into May. It's a stark contrast to 2024, which was extremely wet.

Last year's harvest was one of the worst on record after 18 months of relentless rain. This year's crops could be in trouble unless it rains soon, as signs of stress emerge, and cold nights suppress growth.

On a positive note, dairy prices remain steady-to-firm and beef prices are at an all-time high. The national suckler herd continues to decline, with many farmers culling cows and buying in calves or stores. This has led to a shortage of finished beef and increased demand for younger cattle, supporting stronger prices.

Egg prices remain strong – up 20% since January – due to Bird Flu and increased consumption. Demand for chicken is also buoyant, driven by reduced stocking density standards and tight shed space.

With the UK ewe population also falling, lamb prices should remain firm. It's encouraging to see most sectors doing well.

At Massey Feeds, we've had a record season for sheep feed sales, hosting well-attended sheep meetings across our trading areas.

The inclusion of Elensis in our maize-based Elite Ewe Extra range has delivered a vital energy boost around lambing.

Congratulations to Robin Bartlett's customer, Mark Ireland, who won the 2025 Northern Sheep Farmer of the Year. Check out our YouTube video featuring Mark at his farm near Clitheroe and another by Jake Manning on boosting water intakes in dairy cows during the hot weather.

In the meantime, let's hope we get a good drop of rain soon!



Phil Stirk
Sales Director
07787 104 565

RAW MATERIALS UPDATE

April and the start of May have been very dry. Although crops look well, they will need a drink. Barley is especially forward, with crops well in ear.

In areas of the Black Sea and Europe, they are receiving rain which will help crops exactly at the right time.

In the US, corn and soya plantings are ahead of the five-year average at 43% & 30%, respectively. The large South American Soya harvest is weighing downwards on prices, making other proteins drop into line.

The EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and the UK Soy Manifesto, and probably more so the retailers and manufacturers'

drive for sustainably produced raw materials, is causing the shippers to be hesitant about selling some of the affected products until legislation has been approved.

As with last year, a decision will have to be made at some point. Hopefully, this won't be as late as last year as the new regulations should be in place by 1 January 2026.

Grazing conditions have been good, but regrowth is suffering a little so fibre products are in high demand. Soya hulls and beet pulp have firmed on the back of this but still look attractive on a dry matter basis.



Neil Warburton
Raw Material Director
07471 902538



ADVICE FOR TACKLING CRYPTOSPORIDIUM IN CALVES

Cryptosporidiosis (crypto) is caused by a parasite that causes diarrhoea in calves, leading to poor growth rates.

UK prevalence ranges from 28 to 80% and on farms that experience severe outbreaks, calf losses between 10-30% have been reported. This can be exacerbated in larger herds where increased animal density may cause increased infection rates.

Clinical signs of crypto include diarrhoea, dehydration, loss of appetite, lethargy, weight loss and displays of abdominal pain like belly kicking.

Once present on farm, Crypto is extremely difficult to eradicate. Crypto is resistant to harsh chemicals that are usually used on farms. Hydrogen peroxide-based disinfectants are the most successful at inactivating crypto, but only when the disinfectant is freshly prepared.

If pens are contaminated with faecal material, it can reduce the efficacy of hydrogen peroxide-based disinfectants. Therefore, it is important to clean pens before disinfection. Understanding and managing crypto without relying heavily on antibiotics is important. Orego-stim is a 100% natural oregano essential oil-based feed additive within the FIMLAC Formula SMP Plus and Sweet Start products which promotes feed intake and supports gut health, therefore supporting growth rates and encouraging greater weaning weights. In trials, calves fed Orego—Stim had lower levels of cryptosporidium oocysts in faeces and reduced levels of antimicrobial resistant bacteria.

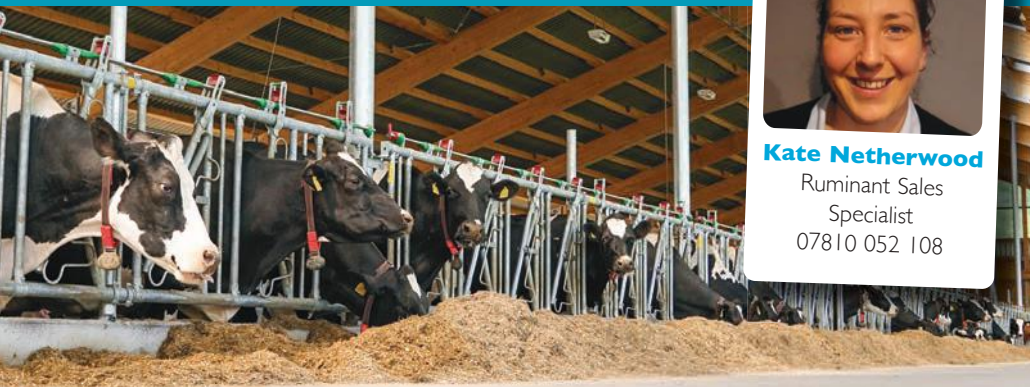
For more information on the products please contact Massey Feeds Sales Specialist.



Alice Powell
Youngstock Specialist
07484 071 222



HOW FEEDING TO SUPPORT IMMUNITY PAYS OFF FOR LANCASHIRE DAIRY



Kate Netherwood
Ruminant Sales
Specialist
07810 052 108

While nutrition is often aimed at supporting efficient milk yield and fertility, feeding to support the immune system of adult cows is often overlooked.

However, Lancashire dairy farmer Marcus Chadwick saw firsthand the importance of immune-focused nutrition after his herd faced a severe lungworm challenge.

Mr Chadwick milks 160 cows alongside his family at Sweet Clough Farm near Colne, supplying Arla. Cows are grazed by day during the summer and last season, they began to show signs of lungworm.

"Despite using every anthelmintic treatment available, under veterinary supervision, the cows kept getting reinfected when we turned them back out," recalls Mr Chadwick.

Body condition score dropped 1-1.5 BCS to 2-2.5 and fertility and milk yield declined from 30 litres daily to 27 litres, with services to conception slipping from 1.4 to 2.11.

To prevent reinfection, Mr Chadwick decided to house the cows in October.

We put in place a nutritional strategy to nurse them back to health. This saw the cows transition onto a partial mixed ration comprising grass silage, Trafford Gold moist feed, Massey's bespoke dairy meal, plus yeast and fat supplements.

In the parlour, cows are fed Massey's FiMLAC NRG 110 nuts to yield up to a maximum of 7kg.

Mr Chadwick had already been feeding Massey Feeds' FiMLAC mineral pack, containing higher levels of organic zinc, selenium and vitamin E to support immune function. To aid recovery, I recommended continuing to feed to pre-infection milk yield levels, despite the fact milk yield and quality had dropped. They also switched to a maize-based concentrate containing Elensis, an essential oil compound that improves feed digestibility.

The immune system is incredibly energy demanding. Reducing feed during illness can severely limit a cow's ability to fight infection and recover quickly.

While this approach increased short-term costs, by Christmas cows had regained condition (3-3.25 on average), and milk volumes and quality were bouncing back.

Costings for November and December were 14.96ppl and 14.68ppl, respectively. But by January, the feed rate had dropped from 0.4kg/litre to 0.35kg/litre and the feed cost decreased to 11.28ppl.

"By the New Year, cows which had been treated and dried off were calving and hitting peak yield," says Mr Chadwick.

The herd is now back on track to reach 10,000 litres this year, averaging 30.8 litres/cow/day at 4.6% butterfat and 3.48% protein. Somatic cell counts are averaging 99,000cells/ml. Fertility has also improved, with services to conception now standing at 1.48.

Cows were turned out this week by day and will be buffer fed by night. Vets have recommended injecting cattle with an anthelmintic, alongside monitoring animals and using a pour-on.

"I believe the feeding approach was key to getting the cows back on track as fast as possible. They've recovered better and faster than I thought they would," comments Mr Chadwick.

FARM FACTS

- ✓ Milking 160 cows plus 175 followers across two farms
- ✓ Yielding 30.8 litres/cow/day at 4.6% butterfat and 3.48% protein
- ✓ Sell surplus bulling/freshly calved heifers and beef calves pre-weaning
- ✓ Farming 370 acres
- ✓ Lambing 150 hogs

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES OF ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE IN THE GAME SECTOR

Massey County Game Feeds has reviewed its additive use and made changes to support gut health and reduce reliance on antibiotics.

Previously, probiotics were only added upon customer request.

Now, Gallipro Fit, a probiotic containing three strains of *Bacillus*, will be included in all County Game and Progressive feed ranges. These live bacteria support a healthy immune system, help protect birds from pathogens, aid digestion, and improve nutrient absorption.

While probiotics are not a cure for enteric problems within the gut, they enhance the bird's microbiome, promoting growth and resilience.

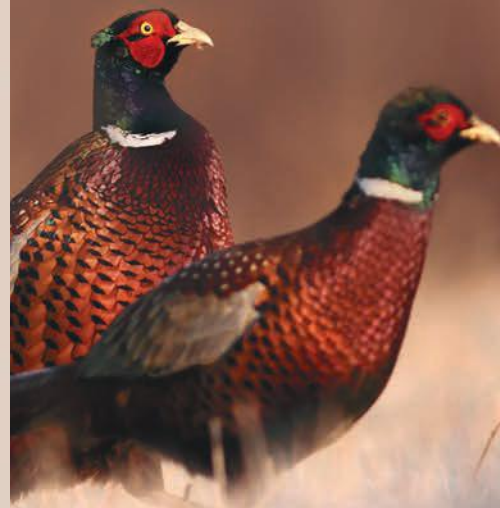
Reducing antibiotic use remains one of the game sector's biggest challenges. Usage has dropped significantly since 2014, but antimicrobial resistance is still a major concern and is predicted to be a leading cause of human mortality by 2050.

Using probiotics like Gallipro Fit is part of the ongoing effort to reduce disease and antibiotic reliance.

Additionally, three essential oils – Carvacrol, Thymol and Eugenol – will now be available through a product called Aviance. These oils offer anti-inflammatory and antibacterial benefits and support gut integrity.

These products that we are adding are there to compliment a well formulated ration, sound management and a comprehensive health plan.

For more information on our Massey County Game Products please contact John or Dawn.



UPDATE ON RSPCA LAYING HEN WELFARE STANDARDS

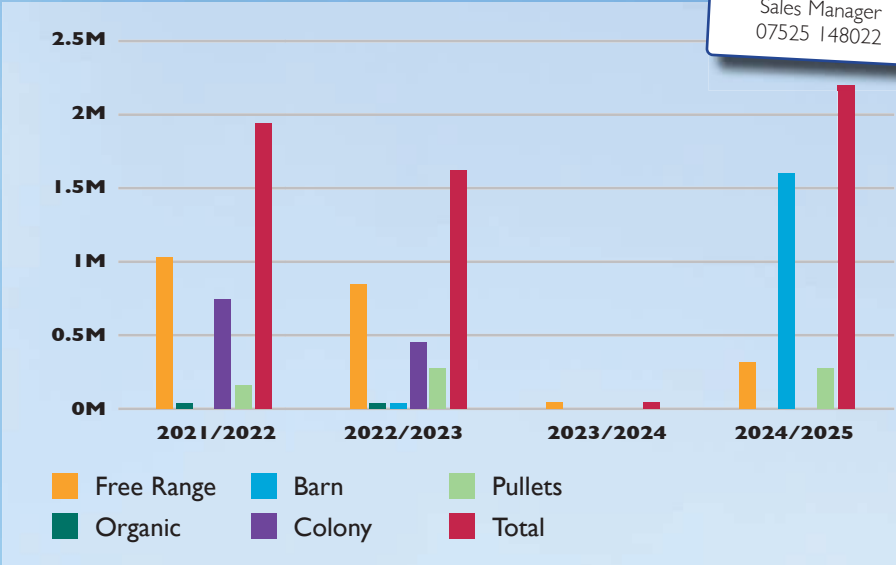


New welfare standards from RSPCA Assured have been confirmed for laying hens, following a temporary pause last year due to industry objections.

The new standards will take effect from 11 July 2025.

The main change involves new requirements for natural daylight, which are expected to be costly and challenging to implement.

- From 1st May 2030, all barn houses must install verandas. Free-range houses are not required to have verandas.
- Existing barn houses must provide 3% natural daylight from 1 May 2032
- By 1 January 2035, or at the time of a cycle refurbishment (whichever comes first), all free-range farmers must provide 3% natural daylight to hens.
- From 1 October 2025, any free-range members building a new house or making major structural refurbishments to an existing building, must incorporate windows to provide 3% natural daylight. This is in addition to daylight provided through pop holes.
- From 1 October 2025, all free-range hens must have access to natural daylight through their pop holes during housing orders (e.g. in the event of avian influenza outbreaks). To comply, producers may use clear material like acrylic over pop holes instead of closing them.
- Farmers now have until 1 May 2027 to meet the 20% natural range cover requirement. This extension allows for two full planting seasons to establish trees, shrubs and cover crops.



AVIAN INFLUENZA UPDATE

After a relatively quiet 2023/2024 winter, the UK poultry industry has been hit hard this year with multiple avian influenza outbreaks.

The graph (above) comparing annual outbreaks across different production systems shows that while free-range flocks have increased exposure, all systems carry notable risk.

In March this year, AI was detected in a lactating ewe during routine surveillance on a premises in Yorkshire where AI had been confirmed in captive birds.

The total number of commercial birds culled so far this year exceeds the 2022/23 total.

Globally, the infection has worsened. In March 2024, bird flu was detected in US dairy cows for the first time. As of March 2025, more than 1,000 herds across 17 states have been infected.

Although case numbers have recently declined following the departure of migratory birds and rising temperatures, the UK remains on high alert.

However, as insurance premiums increase and the scale of losses rise, pressure is mounting for the development of a commercially viable vaccine.

An 'Avian Influenza Taskforce' was formed after the 22/23 season. It includes industry and government representatives, who will be actively examining the feasibility of vaccination. Key issues for them to review include cost, impact on trade, and veterinary capacity to administer vaccines on a large scale.

Looking ahead, AI risk remains high risk through the autumn and winter months. Strict bio-security protocols continue to be the most effective protection strategy.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Event	Date	Location
Cheshire Show	Tuesday 17th - Wednesday 18th June	Clay House Farm, Flittogate Ln, Tabley, Knutsford WA16 0HJ
NSA North Sheep	Wednesday 4th June	Greystoke Castle Farm, Penrith, Cumbria
Great Eccleston	Saturday 12th – Sunday 13th July	Garstang Road (A586) Great Eccleston (near Preston) PR3 0YP
Youngstock Conference	Wednesday 16th July	The National Conference Centre Coventry Road Bickenhill B92 0EJ
Nantwich Show	Wednesday 30th July	Reaseheath College, Wettenhall Road, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 6EL



www.masseyfeeds.co.uk

MASSEY FEEDS

Craneage Mills,
Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 8EE, 01477 536300

Walton-le-Dale,
Preston, Lancashire, PR5 4JJ, 01772 206200

@masseyfeeds
masseyfeeds
massey_feeds

Check out our latest videos at @MasseyBrosFeeds

Sheffield House,
Longnor, Staffordshire, SK17 0PA, 01298 83234