



GETTING READY FOR AUTUMN CALVING

Who would have thought we were about to start preparing cows to dry off for the Autumn block of calving? It only seems like a minute ago we were preparing for the Spring calvers to get going.

The last few weeks of lactation are the time to ensure cows are going to go dry in the best possible health, nicely covered at a body condition score of 2.5 to 3. It is very important to add or manage weight while the cow is milking, not when she is dry. This is due to the way she utilizes and partitions the energy she is being fed. Our team are trained in condition scoring, so now is the time to evaluate the cows to be dried off and either feed a little more for condition, or pull a little back if they are too fat.

Trim feet

All four hooves need to be picked up and given a routine trim. Trimming must be done before all the complexities of calving take place, namely the complete dilation or softening of muscles to allow the calf to be born. Muscle preparation starts weeks before the birth, hence trimming must be done before drying off and never whilst dry. Care in the crush is paramount as we don't want to spoil all the hard work getting her pregnant then go and ruin it by being heavy handed and overzealous at this late stage.

Drying off protocols need to be conducted as if you were preparing for an operation.

Pressure is being applied from processors and buyers to reduce the use of all antibiotics including intra-mammary dry cow tubes. Opting for teat sealants only increases the attention to detail needed when applying. Use rubber gloves to prepare the teat and cleanse it thoroughly. Then surgically wipe them or dip again.

Time of administration is also vital. This should be done as soon as her last milking has finished. Too many cows are segregated out and left in a pen until the end of milking and then brought through the parlour again or worse, put in a crush to be tubed.

If a cow has had a cell count below 150 for the last few milk tests, then sealant only will be sufficient. Please consult your vet for additional advice.

So now she is dry, what don't we do?

Well, we certainly won't be giving her the top grab off the silage clamp because it's too hot or gone off. Or turning her into a field with no grass as she is a bit fat so needs to lose some weight.

This is the time for her to rest and repair. I prefer to opt for a one diet system so that if there are any unforeseen circumstances then we are covered. For example, the twins that weren't expected and came two weeks early or the cow that held to the first service and not to the second. Our Ruminant Feed Specialists have all the tools to ensure that these cows transition in top order.

Our blueprint has been developed to fully understand the background minerals on the farm, and tailor- make a diet to work with them and with any mineral antagonists.

Milk fever

If you just want to feed silage and keep things simple, then opt for either our MF Eliminator Nuts or Blend which is carefully formulated to supply a balance of protein, starch and sugar to prepare the cows rumen for the transition to milking diet. It also incorporates X-Zelit calcium binder which locks up all the background calcium in the diet and makes the cow mobilise skeletal calcium from her bones helping prevent milk fever.

Should you choose a TMR diet then we can supply an XZelit farm pack to be mixed in on farm. Our team can recommend the correct dietary balance.

If it is your preferred choice to feed a DCAB or Partial DCAB diet, then once again the blueprint comes into its own. Full mineral profiling will be conducted with a bespoke mineral formulated for your own herds challenges.

We apply the same principles to our Harpers Pre-Calver minerals. These can either be supplied to you for mixing on farm or in our Pre-Calver Nuts or Rolls.

For more information, talk to your Feed Specialist.



Richard Waters
Ruminant Feed Specialist &
Development Manager
07467 955 130



Farming thoughts

The rapid movement in both input costs and product prices means whatever class of livestock you farm, it is vital to do the numbers to ensure margins are being maximised.

With milk prices between 40 -45p/litre and beef at £4.40/kg, we are seeing the potential for much better returns, the issue comes when we look at input costs. The key two ingredients on most farms are feed and fertiliser, with fuel and power following along closely behind.

When milk was 28p/litre compound feed was £265/tonne so an overall feed rate of 0.35kg/l was costing 9.28ppl or 33% of the milk price. Now, if milk is 42.5p/litre and compound feed is £385, at the same feed rate it will cost 13.4ppl or 31% of the milk price, so there is a decrease in overall feed costs, leaving a good margin.

And with grazing feed rates also lower at summer time, this will lead to higher daily margins per cow, and you will conclude that it is still worth feeding, especially given the risk that not feeding well could have a considerable impact on milk quality and quantity as well as fertility.

Doing the same sort of calculation on beef and lamb is more complicated but looking at an 18-month-old finishing heifer doing 1.4kg/day from silage and 3kg cereal mix costing £320/tonne or 96p/day to get 1.4kgs LWG worth 280p = £3.92. So, anything over 500kgs will still be worth finishing.

Similarly, if you have lambs over 35kgs you should keep their creep feed going, as getting lambs away in June has a big impact on profitability, stocking rates and management. You have done all the hard work, please keep your nerve and finish them as quickly as possible.

Our team are here to help you get the best returns in this challenging market so use their expertise to help your business.



Glen Johns
Sales Director
07831 725 779

harpers@harpersfeeds.co.uk

GRAIN AND STRAIGHTS

Volatile and uncertain are probably the best ways to describe the current raw material market as we experience prices we have never seen before, driven predominantly by reduced global production and ending stocks of wheat.

The crisis in Ukraine continues to be at the forefront, with the main concern being how many exports will take place. Exports over land are happening but this has its problems and restrictions, including different rail track gauges between countries and long delays at borders. Road, rail or barge exports have a target of three million tonnes per month, but there are concerns we will only get to 1.5 million tonnes. The big question is whether and when we will see any Black Sea exports. It has been reported that Russia have been stealing wheat within excess of half a million tonnes already seized and being exported through Crimea.

Some good news is that Ukrainian farmers are a resilient bunch and spring plantings are progressing with 51% of crops planted by early May, although this is 16% down on the same time last year. The main problems are the lack of fuel and restrictions on working day length. Normally operations are done 24 hours per day, but night time working is not permitted as the lights become a target for the Russians and Ukrainian farm machinery has already been targeted by missiles.

Other major news has been the announcement of an Indian export ban on wheat due to their drought. However, they have allowed a half million tonne shipment to go to Egypt in June and July. The news of the ban made wheat jump by £25/t, pushing it above the £350/t mark.

Global wheat supply is a real concern with a 774.8 million of production forecasted, 4.5 million tonnes lower than last year. Main points are the reduction in Ukraine to 21.5 million tonnes, down 11.5 million tonnes on last year, with reductions in Australia and Morocco. This is partly offset by increased production in Canada, Russia and the US.

With the price of wheat rallying many other products are riding on the back of this. Sugar beet availability is likely to be lower with a smaller UK crop, so we will have to rely on imported supplies which will be limited with the restrictions on Russian material.

Proteins seem to be the best value relatively as they have not increased as much as other products. Soya looks good value even though we have seen a drop in the value of the pound. Some cover is now being taken for next winter before we enter the critical growing stage of the US crops where we could see volatility.

With ingredients at record prices, low production and low stocks, several factors could lead to a price drop?

- If exports resume out of the Black Sea.
- If global biofuel mandates are reviewed? Two million tonnes of wheat go into ethanol production in the UK alone. The argument of food or fuel will be an interesting one this year
- Some feed rationing will take place. In the UK there has been reductions in the pig herd and poultry flock as some enterprises become unviable.
- The current COVID situation in China could lead to less demand.

To discuss any of these points, please call us on 01409 254 300



Andrew Davies
Operations Director
01409 254 300



USE AN INOCULANT TO REDUCE WASTE

When it comes to ensiling wholecrop and crimp, the higher dry matter means it's harder to compact. If not compacted properly, there will be a greater risk of oxygen pockets within the clamp, leading to yeast and mould activity, which increases the likelihood of spoilage in the clamp.

Preventing spoilage and waste is important in any year, but especially this year due to the higher feed prices. On average, 15% of what goes into a clamp is lost before feeding. Using an inoculant that is specifically designed to reduce waste by inhibiting yeast and mould activity will help reduce waste, leaving more forage to be fed and reduce purchased feed costs.

Magniva Platinum Wholecrop and Magniva Platinum Crimp are specially formulated to reduce waste.

They utilise two categories of bacteria, a unique combination of antifungal bacteria along with an acidifying bacteria. This combination results in the production of lactic, acetic and propionic acid leading to rapid acidification during ensiling, as well as the stabilisation of the silage during feeding. Adding the incorrect silage inoculant to wholecrop can potentially lead to challenges during feed out. This is because some yeasts use lactic acid as a nutrient source, meaning if the silage contains a lot of lactic acid, but small amounts of antifungal fermentation acids, the silage may heat more rapidly.

Choosing an inoculant specially formulated for crimp or wholecrop will ensure you have more to feed this winter.

For more information, speak to your Feed Specialist.



Paul Cholwill
Ruminant Nutrition
Specialist
07966 021 755

TIME TO LOOK AT PROTEIN EFFICIENCY

With rising protein costs and concerns from processors about the environmental impact of protein sources, a focus on protein efficiency is becoming increasingly important



Father and son Peter and Tim Goodman run a herd of 95 all year-round calving Holsteins at Brockle Farm near Launceston in Cornwall. The 97ha (240 acre) farm is predominantly down to grass although 4ha of cereals are grown a year and preserved as Home'n'Dry.

The Goodman's run a simple system. During the winter the milking herd is housed as one group and fed grass silage, both self-feed and out of ring feeders. High yielders get access to dairy compound in the parlour and through out of parlour feeders. Low yielders are just fed in the parlour.

Cows are turned out by day from late March and are buffer fed silage until after first cut has been taken. As the farm is prone to drying out, buffer feeding will be introduced during the summer as required, starting early to maintain grass covers.

While at grass the main supplementary feeding is through the parlour. While the out of parlour feeders are sited close to the collecting yard, cows only have access for a limited time around milking. Cows are housed again in late October. The herd is averaging 9300 litres at 4.17% fat and 3.35% protein.

Cut out soya

They have always fed a high-quality dairy feed as it is the only purchased feed used, wanting a simple system with the compound providing the balance in the diet. When Arla looked to its dairy suppliers to reduce use of soya in dairy feeds they asked their feed advisor, Graham Carter who recommended changing to Harpers Planet compounds, the first range of feeds in the UK formulated for farmers to move to net zero carbon, by eliminating the use of ingredients linked to environmental damage.

In the Planet range soya meal, soya hulls, soya oil and palm kernel have been replaced with proven alternatives with a lesser impact on the environment including protected rapeseed, sugar beet pulp and cereals.

C16 has been replaced with a non-palm alternative.

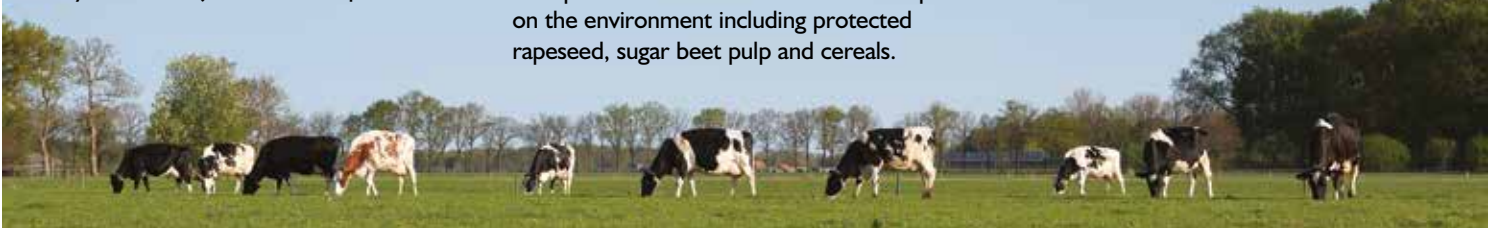
The Planet range worked extremely well and they feed a maximum of 12kg/day through the parlour and out of parlour feeders.

When the cows are turned out they move to a lower protein Planet feed. To further improve efficiency of use of the protein in grass, the compound contains Novatan.

The specific blend of essential oils in Novatan inhibits the activity of hyper ammonia, producing bacteria and improves the digestion of protein in the rumen. This increases protein capture in the rumen and reduces ammonia emissions and waste. Protein efficiency is improved and with grazing meeting more of the protein requirements, cows will need less protein in compounds and buffer feeds.

Feeding compounds containing Novatan and non-soya protein sources to balance the protein in grazing will help improve performance at grass and improve margins while meeting the requirements of milk processors and help move towards net zero milk production.

For more information, speak to your Feed Specialist.



FEED FOR AN EARLY MARKET

W.F & R.H Pethick are tenants of Trevalga Farm, Boscastle which is run by three generations of the Pethick family. The 400 acre farm is rented off Trevalga Estate which is owned by Marlborough College.

They run 80 dairy cows, 200 head of cattle, which includes a pure bred herd of 40 North Devon cattle, and a 400 ewe flock. The flock consists of 160 January lambing mule Suffolks and 240 March lambing ewes, made up of 80 mule ewes to breed replacement and 160 crossbred ewes.

Targeting lambs for an early market the family fed the ewes Harpers Ewe Master 18 Nuts to increase colostrum quality and increase lamb vigour. The lambs are creep fed Harpers Rapid Lamb 18% Pellets to achieve top conversion rates and grading.

The family was delighted with the performance of the sheep feed as their first January born lamb finished at 24.6kg, grading E 3H on the 6th April. They have been selling finished lambs every week since then with an average of between 21 and 22kgs deadweight.

For more information on our sheep feeds speak to your Feed Specialist.



ADDITIVES CAN PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE

I want to look at the area of additives, minerals, and medications within our feed partnership with you.

Whatever animals you are feeding you will need them to be healthy, and able to perform to their potential. For example, they need healthy lungs, an efficient digestive system and sufficient blood supply as well as a robust immune system.

Our diets are formulated to high levels of energy and protein in a form that gives good digestion. We also pay attention to the additives and micro-nutrients we can include to help deliver better performance. With a wide range of products available on the market, with many making impressive claims, we take particular care to make sure anything we recommend to customers is backed up with strong science.

We have selected additives which can manipulate sugar and starch levels and we can add a live yeast product to increase nutrient absorption. Our mineral package is tailored to the needs of Southwest farmers.

For example, our calf diets have the highest level of iodine and vitamin E legally allowable to counteract some forage limitations.

Our use of Ammonium Chloride as a urine acidifier, to prevent Urinary Calculi, is another example of good local nutrition in practice. We are always keen to work with local vets to treat challenges such as Coccidiosis in lambs and calves.

We use prescribed levels of Deccox to either prevent or treat this particularly vicious disease with excellent success rates.

Our partnership commitment to you is that we will always work with you to get to the bottom of any issue affecting the performance of your animals and help develop an effective nutritional solution, using only additional ingredients that are proven to deliver.

For more information, speak to your Feed Specialist.



Stand 604



Stand 738

We have some exclusive show offers only available at Harpers Farm Supplies stand

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

We will be attending the following shows and events in the next few months and look forward to welcoming you to the stand.

Date	Event	Location
9th - 11th June	Royal Cornwall Show	Royal Cornwall Showground, Wadebridge
30th - 2nd July	Devon County Show	Westpoint, Exeter
Saturday 9th July	Liskeard Show	Merrymeet, Liskeard
Saturday 23rd July	Mid Devon Show	Knightshayes, Chettiscombe
Monday 25th July	Woolery Show	Clovelly Court, Woolery
Thursday 28th July	Launceston Show	Kennards House, Launceston, PL15 7EZ



Harpers Feeds

Waldon Way, Holsworthy Industrial Estate, Holsworthy, Devon EX22 6ER
01409 254 300 | harpers@harpersfeeds.co.uk | www.harpersfeeds.co.uk