



HOW IS THE WAR IN UKRAINE AFFECTING FEED MARKETS?

While our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine, understandably markets continue to be driven by the current Ukrainian situation which is creating huge volatility. As many of you know Ukraine is called the breadbasket of Europe, with its highly fertile soil. Since the invasion started, raw material prices have increased significantly. The table below shows the difference in prices from before the invasion to mid-March.

Ukraine is the largest global producer of sunflower seed producing 17.5 million tonnes or 30% of global production. It produces in excess of 30 million tonnes of wheat making it the ninth biggest global producer but more importantly is the fifth biggest exporter with the main markets being North Africa, predominately Egypt. Ukraine also produces in excess of 40 million tonnes of maize grain making it the sixth largest global producer and fourth largest exporter.

Russia also plays a huge part in global production being the third biggest wheat producer, producing an anticipated 75 million tonnes last year. It is the world's largest wheat exporter, exporting 32% of global wheat stocks. With over 13 million tonnes left to export this season the likelihood is that Russia will find homes for this crop in countries that have not imposed sanctions on them and by using non-Black Sea ports.

There are still so many factors that remain unknown, as the conflict continues:

- How long will the war go on?
- How much damage will be done to the country's infrastructure?
- Will spring crops, sunflower and maize get planted?
- Will winter crops, mainly wheat, get the husbandry required and will they get harvested?

All these factors have a huge impact of prices, but until some of these questions are answered it is very difficult to ascertain where the market could go and when.

The predictions are that old crop maize and wheat will remain very firm. The Ukraine still has to export 13.74 million tonnes of maize, which at best we are very unlikely to see for several months.

On the back of this, US maize exports have increased significantly.

With the current situation it has been suggested the EU will plant the ground currently allocated to greening, which could be up to 5% of arable land. Germany is predicted to plant an extra million hectares of spring crops through this system. It is also possible we could see a reduction in biofuel policies across the world to try and increase grain production for food. The whole argument of food or fuel from crops start!!

Raw material price £/t

Raw Material	23-02-22	24-03-22	INCREASE
Wheat	241	320	79
Barley	231	310	79
Maize	265	352	87
Sugar Beet	258	320	62
Soya Hulls	234	303	69
Wheatfeed Pellets	235	290	55
Palm Kernel Expellers	220	280	60
Rapeseed Meal	340	455	115
Hi Pro Soya	435	505	70
Maize Distillers	265	405	140
Sunflower	267	370	103
Wheat Gluten	232	315	83

On top of the problems in the Black Sea region we are also seeing losses of soya in South America, due to the La Nina weather. Brazil is predicted to produce 127 million tonnes, but last October the prediction was 144 million tonnes. The forecast for Argentina has been revised down to 43.5 million tonnes from 51 million tonnes last October.

The next big question is what the US farmers will plant. Prior to the invasion of Ukraine, they were heading towards soya, but with the uplift in maize prices they are now swaying towards maize.

There are a few things for sure, prices will remain volatile, and it is very difficult to see how prices can come back to where they were prior to the invasion of Ukraine. Supply should be maintained but unfortunately we are just having to pay more for ingredients.

During these difficult times if you would like to discuss any matters, please do not hesitate to contact us.



Farming thoughts

We are currently in uncertain times, the likes of which none of us have seen before. We must remain positive and focused on the job in hand. What we must not do is panic or bury our heads in the sand.

The running costs of all businesses are at an all-time high. Farmgate prices will have to keep increasing if the Government doesn't want empty supermarket shelves. Milk prices have finally hit 40ppl and I don't see any reason why they will not continue to rise during the year.

Hopefully we will see some positive movement in beef and lamb prices over the summer too.

Our Government needs to follow the EU and drop all greening, set aside rewilding areas, and encourage farmers to plant more grain.

As you will read in the front page article, the war in Ukraine is having a massive impact on raw material availability and pricing. At present we have a good percentage of cover until the end of June 2022. This will be shared amongst all our customers whilst we will be moving to a monthly price list as of 1st April. This is to lower the impact of prices going forward.

As a business, we are focused on doing all we can to help you keep your animals as healthy and as productive as possible, getting the best return from all your inputs to help make the best of higher prices to maximise margins. Talk to your Feed Specialist about how we can help.



Glen Johns
Sales Director
07831 725 779

harpers@harpersfeeds.co.uk

MAKE BETTER USE OF THE PROTEIN IN GRASS

With some encouraging movements in milk prices it should be possible to improve margins this spring, provided grass is well managed and carefully supplemented. Even with current fertiliser prices, grazed grass remains the cheapest feed for dairy cows. If you can make the best use of grazing, you can improve the return on fertiliser and save on purchased feeds.

The aim must be to keep grazing at the most nutritious three leaf stage, with opening covers of around 2200-2400kgDM/ha and taking cows out as close to 1500kgDM/ha as possible. Prevent back grazing to allow swards to recover and make the best use of whichever fertiliser you have to apply. Measure grass growth so you know what grass is ahead of the cows and also how much grass they are consuming. Look closely at how you supplement grazing to manage the swards, perhaps by buffer feeding. Covers over 3500kgDM/ha won't be grazed effectively so it will be much better to mow and bale paddocks that get ahead.

Turnout will give you the chance to cut back on purchased protein in particular and reduce feed costs, especially if your cows can make the best use of all the protein in grazed grass.

Cut protein

Milking cows require around 15-17% crude protein in the total diet depending on their yield and stage of lactation. The good news is that grazed grass is typically 16-28% protein depending on the sward type, growth stage, fertiliser regime and time of the year. This means that grass can go a long way towards meeting the protein requirement of cows, reducing or in some situations removing the need for any purchased protein. But to do this the cow must be able to utilise the protein efficiently in the rumen.

Grass protein is mainly in the form of rumen degradable protein (RDP) and there is often more than the rumen can utilise. If the rumen microbes are unable to use all of the RDP, it will be broken down to ammonia in the rumen, absorbed into the blood stream and converted to urea leading to high levels of urea in the milk and blood.

In simple terms, if the rumen cannot use the protein in grass, any excess protein is wasted and has to be replaced with purchased protein if cows are to milk to their potential. And this will have an impact on margins.

In addition, there is an energy cost to the animal in excreting the excess protein as urea in the blood and milk, reducing the energy for milk production. Higher urea also results in poorer fertility due to the high pH and elevated non-esterified fatty acid (NEFA) concentrations in developing eggs.

To help your cows make the best use of the protein in grass, we have included Novatan in our grazing diets. 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, your cows will need less protein in compounds and buffer feeds.

Grazing range

Feeding grazing compounds containing Novatan and ensuring the protein sources in the compounds precisely balance the protein in grazing will help improve performance at grass and improve margins. We now include Novatan in our spring grazing compounds, helping improve performance, reduce costs and lessen the impact on the environment.

Our Spring range has slightly changed from last Spring. The Creamfield range has been improved and includes Novatan and is available as 13, 15 or 17% protein, with a high sugar beet inclusion.

Don't be afraid to drop the protein percentage in your dairy cake as long as you are monitoring grass closely. Remember cows only have a requirement for 15-17% protein in the total diet. With most grazing swards being over 18-20%, why would you add an 18% protein cake on top?

By making best use of grazing and supplementing grass carefully it is possible to make sure that more of the higher milk price ends up in your bank.

For more details on the compound range and bespoke blends with Novatan, talk to your Feed Specialist.



Richard Waters
Ruminant Feed Specialist &
Development Manager
07467 955 130



WHAT TO DO ABOUT FERTILISER?

With ever-increasing fertiliser prices, it's time to make better use of other ways to increase grassland output.

If you are a lowland, mixed farm you have a priceless commodity stored in your grassland and that is fertility. Years of livestock farming put organic matter into soils which can be utilised at times like this.

Beef and sheep farmers are now split into two groups; those that have bought fertiliser and those that have not. For those that have some in stock, my advice is to make it go as far as you can. Grass will benefit from a starter dressing and with slurry and farmyard manure, will grow a reasonable crop.

For those who have not got any fertiliser booked and on farm, don't panic, but you need to make some serious calculations about what you need to achieve from grazed grass this summer, and how you are going to fill your clamps and barns with forages that will perform next year.

Rotational grazing will considerably increase grass yield and animal growth. If you have young swards, be prepared to stitch in clover for a mid to late season contribution of high protein feed and nitrogen fixing for grasses.

Look at how you can plough and grow additional crops like stubble turnips, rape and kale. These can be fed through the summer and autumn, and then followed by new grass mixtures which should include legumes and herbs to make them much less reliant on artificial fertilisers.

In the short term, make a heap of Bokashi (fermented organic matter) from your shed dung. When the cattle go out, treat the dung in the shed with 2l/t of Actigen, add 1% crushed seashells and stack the dung outside. Cover with an old silage sheet and weight down with tyres. After 8-10 weeks, you will have an organic fertiliser with all the nutrients retained, and much of the fibre broken down by the bacterial digestion process. Use at four tonnes

per acre and graze after three weeks. Look carefully at how much total feed your animals are going to need. The faster an animal grows and gets to slaughter weight, the less total feed you will need.

If you have high quality genetics with good growth potential, keep them growing by giving 1kg/100kg liveweight of beef nuts or a mix. This will ensure that the rumen works efficiently by increasing the numbers of digesting bacteria. Young cattle and young grass are the way forward in these challenging times.

For more information and help planning your forage options talk to your Feed Specialist or call us on 01409 254 300.



Bill Harper
Director
07831 099 182

LOOK AFTER ALL LAMBS TO MAXIMISE LAMB CROP VALUE

Having a good system in place for feeding triplets and orphan lambs will increase the number of lambs sold and the value of the lamb crop.

Richard and Charlotte Matthews farm 300 acres near Bodmin in Cornwall. Their commercial flock of 300 cross-bred ewes start lambing indoors in February, with 70 ewe lambs lambing outdoors in April. All lambs are fattened except ewe lambs selected for breeding.

In 2019, the Matthews purchased a Volac Eco Feeder. The ewes bearing triplets will always have one lamb taken off to be reared by the machine. In 2021, the farm had its first ever quintuplets, which meant the couple left two lambs with the ewe and the remaining three were fed by the machine.

Machine fed lambs are fed Lamlac milk powder from Harpers Farm Supplies which is proven to mix well and is suitable for all fostered lamb systems. High intakes and good protein content mean these lambs will grow well.

Lambs that remain with the ewes are grass fed while those reared on the Eco Feeder are introduced to straw and creep within a few days of birth on an ad-lib regime.

Their process is to wean these lambs abruptly around 35 days, ensuring a good intake of creep and access to fresh water prior to this. These lambs will stay on creep until they leave the farm.

The lambs are fed Harpers Lamb Start 2 Finish Pellets which are designed to be fed ad-lib from one week old. Lamb Start 2 Finish Pellets are very palatable and contain Sel-Plex to promote early lamb vigour.

The combination of carefully formulated lamb milk replacer and lamb pellets means that all fostered lambs grow well, ready to make a good price and maximise the total lamb crop.

Talk to your Feed Specialist for more information on our range of lamb milk powders and starter feeds.

TAKING STOCK OF FORAGES

It is important to remember that forage quantity and quality are what ruminant farmers truly rely on for cost-effective production both when grazing and when animals are housed. With input costs at an all-time high, we need to make sure that we are paying close attention to what our fields and forages are doing for us.

Looking at grass seeds, it is very important to know the history and productivity of the individual swards. If these swards have become unproductive, or tired, consider taking them out this autumn and reseed for next season. Alternatively, you could consider scratching or drilling fresh seeds into older swards to improve outputs. You could consider adding clover to help reduce the reliance on purchased fertilisers.

In either case it is important to take advice on the seed mixes and varieties. We stock a wide selection of high quality seed mixtures from Limagrain and with good planning can get bespoke mixes made up for any farm.

With the large rises in input costs, it is more important than ever to make sure we are bringing good quality, high ME forages back to the yards. When comparing different forages to see which is the most cost-effective forage per MJ of energy, recent figures show maize silage comes out on top.

We can supply early maturing varieties which provide high yields of quality forage and which will be off in time to allow a successor crop to be drilled.

Speak to your Feed Specialist about getting the best from your forages this year.



Jake Chisholm
Feed Specialist
07823 344 222



Matt Dymond
Ruminant Feed Specialist
07880 406 212

SECURE BETTER QUALITY FORAGE BY USING AN INOCULANT

Making high-quality silage and minimising waste will be even more important this year to help reduce feed costs next winter and maximise the return on investment in growing grass. To do this you will need to ensure a top-quality fermentation.

Using a crop and condition specific inoculant will help by increasing the efficiency of grass fermentation, speeding up the ensiling process and helping reduce spoilage and the loss of feed value. It could also allow you to safely open clamps after as little as 15 days if you need to feed silage quickly.

The Magniva Platinum range of forage inoculants from Lallemand contains a specific combination of bacteria and enzymes that drive a fast and effective fermentation to produce excellent quality silage, helping increase production from forage which will be vital in a challenging year.

Magniva Platinum Grass Dry is designed for ensiling high dry matter grass and should be used when the crop is 30% DM or higher, meaning there is a risk of aerobic instability which may lead to a loss of valuable nutrients.

Magniva Platinum Grass Wet is perfect when ensiling in challenging conditions or when the crop is below 30% DM. In these conditions there is a risk to the acidification of the grass either due to increased buffering of the crop or due to a dilution of the fermentation acids by the excess moisture contained within the crop.

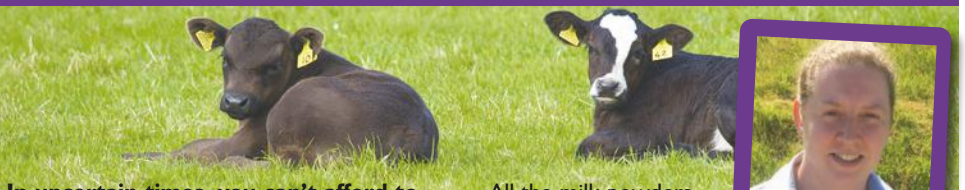
Using an appropriate inoculant as part of your silage making this year will help give you the foundations for more effective diets next winter.

For more information on Magniva inoculants, talk to your Feed Specialist.



Paul Cholwill
Ruminant Nutrition Specialist
07966 021 755

IT'S STILL IMPORTANT TO INVEST IN CALVES



Louise Hosegood
Feed Specialist
07702 874 763

In uncertain times, you can't afford to scrimp on your future dairy replacement and prime beef animals. Investing to optimise early growth in pre-weaned calves is the foundation of better lifetime performance.

Pre-weaning is the phase of a calf's life when optimal growth occurs. Calves can achieve a 2:1 feed conversion efficiency, meaning every 100g of feed in will result in 50-60g growth out. They will never match this again.

Feeding the best quality milk will play a large part in this growth stage and ensure calves double their birthweight and can be weaned sooner.

With higher milk replacer prices, feeding whole milk might be seen as a good option, but it is important to consider the hidden costs, for example the cost of pasteurising and storing whole milk to keep it in good condition. Then it is important to consider the disease risks of Johnes Disease etc.

Milk powder is tested and free from disease and from antibiotic residues. Milk powder is convenient, always available, and easy to use.

All the milk powders we sell are fixed formulation, so you know there is consistency, which will reduce the risk of nutritional scour. Whole milk on the other hand can be more variable leading to changes in dry matter intake and the osmotic concentration, both of which can increase the risk of scours.

You may be tempted to change powders to save money but remember cheaper milk powders will be cheaper for a reason! Look carefully at where your protein source is coming from as digestibility of protein varies greatly - dairy protein is the best! Powders also supply vitamins and minerals to meet a calves requirements.

Buying a cheaper powder or swapping to whole milk may look like a saving but if as a result calves take longer to double birthweight, are weaned later and if you see increased scours the savings will soon evaporate.

Talk to your Feed Specialist about the approach that is best for your calves.

NEW FEED SPECIALIST JOINS THE TEAM

Dean James has joined us as a Feed Specialist bringing a blend of practical experience and a background in the feed trade.

Dean has been involved in farming all his life and after gaining qualifications and experience managing dairy herds, he and his wife Tanya took the tenancy of a Devon County Council farm in 1999. After losing the herd in the 2001 Foot and Mouth outbreak, they restocked and in 2003 moved to another Devon County Council farm.

With the tenancy coming to an end, they decided to sell the herd and Dean changed career direction. In 2015 he joined a ruminant feed company where he stayed for

seven years, using the practical knowledge and the new skills he developed to help farmers get the best results from their systems.

He believes the team at Harpers has a lot to offer farming businesses as we work together in this challenging time.



Throughout April, Harpers Farm Supplies are offering

10% off all Datamars cattle Z-tags when you buy 50+ pairs.

Quote code: SCZT22 when ordering

For more information, speak to Emma or Elliot on 01409 259 600.



Harpers Farm Supplies have a wide variety of products eligible under the DEFRA Farming Investment Fund. A full list of eligible products can be found on their website www.farmersdirect.co.uk. For more information, please call the store on 01409 259 600.



Harpers Feeds

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