

Beans

Bretts are now offering a limited number of contracts to growers to grow beans. If you are interested in growing beans and if you wish to get further information, please contact your Sales Rep or contact the office before 16th February.

- It is vital for all tillage farmers to check if their cropping programme complies with new CAP reform requirements before they start sowing in spring 2015.



Ruminant Support Service (RSS)

Our Ruminant Support Specialists, Michael Foley and David Lawrence are available to offer technical advice to all livestock clients. To avail of David and Michael's technical expertise please contact your Sales Representative. Heather Peppard our Nutritionist is also available at the Callan office.



Michael Foley

A long standing member of the Bretts technical sales team, Michael has many years of expertise on dairy and beef nutrition matters.



David Lawrence

A PhD graduate, has studied and worked in Moorepark and Johnstown Castle, and has numerous publications including the Journal of Dairy Science.



Heather Peppard

Responsibility for feed formulation within Bretts for many years. Offering technical advice to enhance the overall performance of livestock on farms.



Staff Profile



Séamus Whitty

Technical Sales Representative

Séamus Whitty has recently joined our technical sales team. Séamus comes from a strong dairy and beef background in Taghmon, Co.Wexford. He graduated from UCD with an honours degree in Animal and Crop production and has worked with a number of different farms throughout his studies including Teagasc, Johnstown Castle, Wexford.

Séamus is covering East Waterford and South Wexford and is working closely with our Ruminant Support Specialist, Michael Foley. His goal is to help clients to improve efficiencies within their own farm gate and this involves livestock systems, grassland management and crop husbandry.

Dry Cow Management

Cows dried off early, may have gained too much body condition. The introduction of straw in the diet will prevent them from getting too fat. Fat cows are more prone to milk fever and on a grass diet will use that fat to fuel milk production, thus losing too much body condition.

- If cows are within 2 weeks of calving do not restrict their diet as their appetite is declining naturally as the calf takes up more room. Seek technical advice.
- Some herds have cows, especially second calvers, losing condition before calving due to poor silage quality (<65% DMD). These cows need to be supplemented with 1 -2kgs of concentrates to prevent further weight loss.



Sub-clinical Milk Fever

Sub-clinical milk fever is caused by calcium deficiency and can present itself in many ways. Symptoms such as slow calvings and retained cleanings are key indicators of sub-clinical milk fever.

- Calcium is required for muscle contraction in the uterus during the calving and cleaning process. The cow has a high calcium demand for milk production and may not absorb required calcium from the diet.
- High levels of potash in grass silage can interfere with the release of calcium to the cow.

Retained cleanings may be caused by a number of factors, but if you have experienced greater than 5% incidence in your herd last year please speak to our Ruminant Support Specialists as nutritional changes can help prevent this.

Calf Management

Newborn calves are the future of your herd. It is important to get the basics right:

- Feed sufficient colostrum (minimum of 3 litres) in first hour from birth.
- Remove calves from calving pen immediately to remove sources of infection.
- Ensure plenty of straw bedding to keep calves warm and clean. Keep the shed well ventilated overhead, but free of draughts.
- Introduce concentrates from 4 days of birth to encourage the development of the rumen.
- With surplus milk on dairy farms be mindful of hygiene and washing out buckets to prevent build up of bacteria.
- Under EU Welfare codes of practice 'Once-a-Day' feeding of calves is only permitted after 28 days of age.
- Offer access to fresh drinking water and straw. Do not offer hay as this will limit rumen development and can lead to 'pot bellied' calves.

Bretts Ultra Calf 18 is suitable as a starter feed and can be fed until weaning. It contains Rumi-start and is well proven to promote good rumen health. For 2015, it is in a new easy open bag.

We also stock a range of milk replacers including **Volac Blossom Easymix** and **Provimi ProviMilk Milk Replacers**.



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Ardfinnan,
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OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Weanlings

Our Ruminant Support Specialists are reporting a high incidence of respiratory infections and coughing in weanlings. We have sourced a unique natural complementary feed called 'Pulmosure' to help combat this problem. Pulmosure boosts the immune system of the animal and clears animal airways to reduce the risk of pneumonia. It is available in a 7kg bucket and can be fed directly at a rate of 25g (1 oz)/200kg weanling.

Replacement Heifers

Heifers that will be presented for breeding this spring have only 60 days left until 1st April. With typical growth rates at 0.7kgs /day that means they will gain another 42 kgs. Are yours on target? Do not cut feed from lighter heifers, even if grass is just around the corner. **Bretts Heifer Rearer Cubes & Ration** are the best product for all young stock as the minerals profile and specification is designed specifically for replacement heifers.

Milking Cows

The majority of farms have started calving and still face two months where quota is a major constraint. Nutrition can influence milk yield by reducing the overall supply of protein but this comes with a



health warning as some winter milk suppliers have experienced low milk protein % by restricting protein excessively.

Feed cows according to dry matter intake and energy requirements, but limit protein in the overall diet. However, with grass only in the diet this can be difficult to achieve.

- 16 kgs DMI for 25 litres
- 18 kgs DMI for 30 litres

Based on our ongoing annual analysis, grass is high in protein (20-25%). According to Heather Peppard, Nutritionist, the high protein content of spring grass will drive cows to milk off their back. It is important to supplement according to cow breed and potential yield.

Most spring calving herds have three feeds available - grass, grass silage and concentrates. For farms with straw, wholecrop or maize silage there are more options available. A study conducted in Hillsborough showed that milk yield can be curtailed if you can bring the protein in the overall diet from 17.5% CP in DM to 14.5 % CP in DM. In this study yield dropped from 34.4 litres to 30.9 litres with no effect on milk solids.

In the event a cow loses more than 0.5 body condition score (~25kgs liveweight), then submission rates drop to 41% and cows pregnant after 42 days drop to 47%. If there is no grass included in the diet continue with 18% protein supplements Eg. **Bretts Milkwell**

- Only feed low protein supplements (14%-16% CP) once grass is in the diet.
- For cows at grass continue to feed silage (good quality grass silage, maize or wholecrop silage) to make up one third of the total dry matter intake by keeping cows on silage by night. This dilutes the high protein in grass.
- Use your Spring Rotation Planner to manage grass supply in 1st round.
- Grass is the cheapest feed available but contrary to some advice we do not recommend a grass only diet in a tight quota scenario, as grass will drive milk at the expense of body condition and may have a long term detrimental impact on herd fertility.
- Once a day milking on some farms may have a role to play but it is subject to careful management and its success depends on cow type. In principal the nutritional advice for such herds remains the same.
- Bretts **Maxi Breeder Cube 14** is recommended where quota is tight. The merits to success in terms of maintaining body condition is to feed at a minimum of 5kgs/cow/day for 25 litres. Cows doing 30 litres require 7kgs/cow/day. Maxi Breeder contains high levels of minerals, including protected copper, selenium and zinc, aimed at lower feeding rates. Cal Mag is included in a 3.5 kg feed rate.
- Bretts also offer a competitively priced **Quota Manager Cube 14** for 2015 as an alternative to Maxi Breeder 14 and Ultra Dairy 16.

In order for low protein supplements to curtail milk production at grass, a minimum of 6kgs DM of silage must remain in the diet. A diet of 6kgs DM grass by day, silage by night and 5kgs of a 14% dairy cube, the total protein in the diet is still over 17% and this is due to the high protein grass.

Grass Monitoring

Throughout the grazing season Bretts will take grass samples from a number of dairy farms. Grass sampled in mid-January from paddocks closed off in October tested as follows:

	Dry Matter	Crude Protein (% DM)	ME (MJ/kg DM)
Sample A	20.4	23.5	12.0
Sample B	19.8	24.8	12.0



Fertiliser planning 2015

Soil testing is the basis of forming a fertiliser plan. Soil testing is an invaluable tool that helps accurately measure and manage the pH and nutrient status of your soils. Bretts offers the full range of soil testing including soil mapping. A fertiliser plan should be completed for all crops and the plan should be based on crop off takes (Table 1) and soil test results.

Table 1. Crop Offtakes for P and K

Crop	Yield t/acre	P units/acre	k units / acre
Winter Wheat / Barley	4.0	30	80
Winter Oats	3.6	27	104
Spring Wheat & Barley	3.2	24	73
First Cut Grass Silage	2.4 DM**	19	120

**Dry Matter

- Organic Manures are a valuable source of nutrition as can be seen below but slurry can be variable.
 - Cattle Slurry 1000 gal per acre is equal to 1 bag 7-7-39 per acre
 - Pig Slurry 1000 gal per acre is equal to 1 bag 13-7-20 per acre
- Sulphur is also an important element, cereals and grass require 15 – 20 units per year, therefore Sul CAN (N 27% S 5%) should be used when top dressing.

Spring Barley varieties available for this year are KWS Irina, Mickle and Sy Taberna. These three varieties are fully recommended on the 2015 Recommended List.

Brett Spring Barley varieties			
	KWS Irina	Mickle	Sy Taberna
Yield	105	103	101
Comment	Highest yielding variety on list, excellent disease package.	Good yield, Best straw on list, suitable for fertile sites, good on Rhyncho.	Consistent good yield, excellent grain quality.