

Solutions to tackle fodder deficits

2018 will be remembered by the farming community in the South East as one of the most challenging years for a very long time. The supply of fodder is extremely variable from farm to farm, with our recent fodder survey showing that deficits are ranging from as low as 10% to greater than 50%. At this point, it is essential that farmers carry out a fodder budget and silage analysis in order to determine forage reserves and make timely decisions. All livestock farmers should still strive to produce more silage where grass growth permits. If you have at

least 75% of your forage requirements (including grass silage, wholecrop, maize silage, hay and straw) it will be possible to fill the forage gap by preparing a feed budget until next spring and using **Bretts Fodder Stretcher Ration**. If you have less than 75% of your forage requirements, it will be necessary to continue to source or produce more silage. In order to reduce forage demands, farmers must also consider culling empty or problem cows, selling surplus young stock at an earlier stage and looking at alternative bedding options to straw.



Bretts Fodder Stretcher Ration

Bretts Fodder Stretcher Ration is formulated to include grass pellets and other raw materials that will help fill the gap and stretch supplies that are in your yard. It is suitable for dry cows, milking cows, in-calf heifers and weanlings over 6 months of age. Our Fodder Stretcher Ration will be available

from October 1st at a very competitive price. For further advice, please contact your Bretts Sales Representative.

For every 10 tons of Fodder Stretcher Ration used on a farm it will save approximately 42 bales of silage (at 210 kgs DM per bale) or 35 tons of pit silage at 25% dry matter.

Ad-lib feeding of beef animals

Due to fodder shortages, a lot of cattle will be targeted for intensive finishing. During the transitional feeding period of approximately 3 weeks, the level of concentrate increases gradually while the amount of silage or forage is reduced. This period can be very challenging as there is a risk that the rumen pH will drop and cause acidosis. However, with excellent management and the correct selection of feed cattle, your livestock should settle into high feeding rates very quickly.

Ad-libitum Feeding: Top tips to achieve a stress free transitional period

- Animals require adequate feeding and lying space, therefore do not overstock pens. The animals are only going to increase in size overtime.
- Intensively fed animals perform better on straw bedded sheds or peat moss but the majority of beef animals are housed on slats. If available pen animals on rubber slats.
- Check water supply daily and clean out drinkers.
- It is vital that there is good ventilation and air movement in the shed. Clipping a strip of hair up the back of the animal can reduce 'sweating' in the shed.
- For the first few days after housing animals, offer an abundance of silage and straw. This allows the rumen bugs to acclimatise to an indoor diet.
- Select a feed that is suitable for ad-lib feeding. At Bretts, we firmly believe in the use of feed additives in conjunction with careful raw material selection. **Acid Buff** and **Actisaf Yeast** are proven to maintain rumen pH, reducing the risk of acidosis, loose dungs and subsequent lameness.
- Introduce feed at no more than 3 kgs per head per day and make sure every animal can access the trough. As a rule of thumb, increase feed rate by 1 kg every third day and once you get to 5 kgs, feed cattle twice a day. Continue to offer an unlimited supply of good quality forage; grass silage and straw are ideal. As concentrate levels increase, the volume of forage eaten will decline.
- Suitable feeds for transitional and ad-lib feeding include **Bretts Supreme Beef Cubes**, **Beef Elite Cubes**, **Coarse Beef** and **Coarse Bull Ration**. For further advice, contact a member of the Bretts technical team.

PRODUCT FOCUS

Supreme Beef Cubes



The focus of every beef farmer must be to improve efficiency by maximising the weight gain for every kilo of feed consumed. Our nutritionist has always worked on this principle when formulating feed for intensively fed beef animals. Having only launched our **Supreme Beef Cubes** last autumn, farmers are already seeing excellent results. The formulation is based on the success of **Beef Elite** which is renowned for consistent performance and we also enhanced it with the addition of **Actisaf® Yeast** which has been scientifically tried and tested. At farm level, farmers feeding **Supreme Beef Cubes** reported less rumen upsets in the build up to ad-lib levels and more consistent dungs, which indicates improved rumen function. As a result, daily live weight gain and feed conversion efficiency improved. If animals can reach target slaughter date approximately 10 days earlier, it will reduce work load and save fodder.

Reminder – to keep updated on our news Find us on Facebook

 www.facebook.com/BrettBrothersLtd

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Windgap,
Co. Kilkenny
Tel: 051-648204

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Callan,
Co. Kilkenny
Tel: 056-7755300

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Ardfinnan,
Co. Tipperary
Tel: 052-7466208

OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SALES REPRESENTATIVE

www.brettbrothers.ie