



MAINTAINING BODY CONDITION IN HARSH WEATHER

The key to good fertility is to minimise the loss of body condition in the first six weeks of lactation by maintaining adequate dry matter (DM) intake. As a result, concentrate feeding levels should be flexible, depending on weather, grazing conditions, grass availability, body condition and milking ability.

February 2020 was one of the wettest in recent years with over 150mm of rainfall reported in our region. This has led to difficult grazing conditions and an increased reliance on silage; therefore, it is important to offer the best quality silage available to milking cows. With grass utilisation restricted, it is critical you have enough silage or other forage for the remaining housing period. It is important to avoid making rash decisions that will have long term consequences on milk solids and subsequent fertility.



CRUDE PROTEIN IN DAIRY FEED FOR DEROGATION FARMS

With the new derogation requirements for 2020, livestock on a 100% grass-based diet must be fed a maximum of 16% protein from 1st April. We will focus on this in greater detail in our April newsletter.

WHAT TO FEED?

The average protein in the total diet, including grass, silage, straw and parlour feed, should be at least 16%. When feeding silage only, feed a minimum of 18% dairy nut, such as Milkwell or Milk Max. When including grass in the total diet, choose from Brett's 16% protein range which has flexible feeding rates to supply enough Cal-Mag and minerals at lower feeding rates. It also allows for increased feeding levels when grass supply is reduced.

RECOMMENDED CONCENTRATE SUPPLEMENTATION DEPENDING ON FORAGE TYPE AND SUPPLY

Forage Available	Parlour Feed Required	Milk Yield		
		22 Litres	26 Litres	30 Litres
Indoors fulltime on 70% DMD Silage	Milkwell 18% Milk Max 18%	6.5kg	7.5kg	8.5kg
Indoors fulltime on 65% DMD Silage	Milkwell 18% Milk Max 18%	7.5kg	8.5kg	9.5kg
Grass by day (6kg DM) Adlib 70% DMD silage by night	PIP Spring 16% Ultra Dairy 16%	5.0kg	6.0kg	7.0kg

The table above gives an approximate guideline, for detailed recommendations contact your local Ruminant Support Specialist

PRODUCT FOCUS

Goldstart Calf Milk Replacer

Goldstart milk replacer, recently launched by Brett's, has been precisely formulated to meet the requirements of fast-growing dairy and beef calves. Goldstart includes carefully selected whey powders and digestible vegetable oils, delivering 24% protein and 18% oil. Similar to Brett's Ultra Calf feed, Goldstart includes a unique health package, supplying optimum levels of vitamins and minerals to promote a healthy digestive and respiratory system. The package also includes essential amino acids, which are the primary building blocks for boosting protein, and ultimately, calf growth and development. The inclusion of a unique 'Mother Smell', also makes Goldstart very palatable, encouraging the calf to drink.



Goldstart Extra Milk Replacer

Based on the success of PulmoCX in our Ultra Calf feed, we are delighted to be able to offer Goldstart Extra Milk Replacer with the inclusion of PulmoCX. In recent years, PulmoCX has delivered excellent results at farm level, with significant reductions in the incidence of respiratory infections and protozoa scours, such as Coccidiosis and Cryptosporidium. For further information, please contact your Sales Representative.

MARCH SPECIAL OFFER

Brett's Ultra Calf Feed
€50 off orders of bulk calf feed over 3 tons or receive two bags free with every full pallet (minimum order 1.4 tons) ordered.

Brett's Goldstart and Goldstart Extra Milk Replacer
Two free bags included with every 1 ton pallet ordered.



CHECKLIST FOR MILK PROTEIN

In March, spring calving herds always see a dip in milk protein percentages, as milk yield is increasing each day which has a dilution effect on milk protein. This year, the protein drop could be more pronounced due a combination of compact calving, little access to grass, poor silage quality and, in some instances, underfeeding of concentrates relative to milk yield. If milk proteins are falling sharply or are already less than 3.2 % consider the following:

- Ask your Brett's Ruminant Support Specialist to assess daily total DM intake relative to milk yield, as energy deficiency is the main cause of low milk protein percentages
- Review total dietary protein; a shortage of protein due to little or no grass in the diet means cows cannot make milk protein
- Check the calibration of parlour feeders to ensure consistency
- In poor grazing conditions, grass utilisation declines by 2kg DM, therefore, increase parlour feeding or offer silage as an additional energy source on very wet days
- Check ratio of milk fat to protein percentages. Fat percentages should not exceed 1.4:1 as this can indicate the cows are 'milking off their back' to fuel milk production

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