

HARVEST 2020

As we approach the 2020 harvest, our agronomy team are reporting that most of the winter barley and wheat crops look promising in terms of yield and quality. However, there are some disappointing crops and this is because of the poor sowing conditions last autumn. Spring sown crops are more variable depending on sowing date. This is mainly due to the recent prolonged dry spell, but there is still plenty of time for these crops to turn around.

This year many of our local tillage farmers are growing beans which is an ideal break crop and has the added bonus of providing a native source of protein for inclusion in our range of dairy, beef and sheep feeds. Beans are legumes and are an ideal protein source with good levels of energy from starch. Beans can be included in cubes or rolled for use in coarse rations.

We wish all of our cereal growers a fruitful harvest and most importantly, a safe harvest.

HARVEST PHOTO COMPETITION FOR 2021 CALENDAR

This summer, we are running a competition for the best 'Harvest' photo to be chosen for inclusion in our 2021 calendar. We would love you to get involved, so get snapping! Pictures should be in landscape format and must be a minimum of 2 megabytes in size. Please email your entry to photos@brettbrothers.ie and include the name, address and telephone number of the photographer and where the photo was taken. The chosen winner will receive a €50 One 4 All Voucher.



GRASS WATCH – QUALITY IS VARIABLE

The challenge for the coming month for all livestock farmers is to maintain grass quality. At present, with the differences in rainfall, we are seeing variances in grass quality, even within the same area. Based on the average grass quality results in the most recent Grass Watch reports, an intake of 15kg DM of grass is supporting 17.5 litres of milk, while the supplementation of 4 kg of concentrates will yield 26 litres. In summary, energy levels in grass dropped in recent weeks due to less sugars and an increase in fibre or stem (NDF). With the recent rainfall, there has been a notable increase in grass protein due to the rapid uptake of nitrogen and milk urea levels will start to rise again. Our advice is to watch the bulk tank and milk constituents and to weigh calves and growing stock regularly.

Grass Watch Report - Grass Quality

	Brett's Monitor Farm	Minimum	Overall Average	Maximum
Dry Matter (%)	15.4	15.1	16.2	17.5
Est ME (MJ/kg DM)	10.6	10.6	11.2	12.6
Crude Protein (%)	23.4	21.7	27.4	34.0
NDF (%)	49	42	46	51
Oil A (%)	4.0	4.0	4.9	6.3
Sugars (%)	5.2	3.5	5.1	7.3



Monitoring Youngstock

This season our Ruminant Support Team have seen more issues than normal with calves and groups of calves with unexplained setbacks and symptoms of scour and secondary respiratory infections. In many cases, there has been no one single reason for such events, that has resulted in some calves becoming ill and requiring veterinary attention. If there is insufficient fibre in the diet, there is often poor rumen function leading to acidosis, scour and sometimes vitamin B deficiency. One suggestion is to offer a source of fibre, e.g., straw or hay to the grazing calves. If you have encountered such problems, please speak to our Ruminant Support Specialists, Michael Foley or David Lawrence.

Tip for the month:

Weigh your youngstock and group calves according to weight for a targeted feed programme.

Growth Targets for Replacement Heifers

- You need to know the mature weight of your cows in the main herd.
- Target calving age is 22 months to 26 months, and this is accepted as giving the best lifetime performance.

The following chart shows target weight gains assuming 600 kgs mature body weight:

Age	Targets % Mature Liveweight	Target Weight (kgs)
9 Months (Puberty)	40	240
15 Months (Breeding)	60	360
24 Months (Calving)	90	540

PRODUCT FOCUS



Heifer Rearer Cubes and Coarse Ration 18%

Brett's Heifer Rearer feeds are carefully formulated with the sole purpose of growing replacement heifers to achieve target weights, at the critical stages of puberty and breeding. This ensures that an in-calf heifer calving down, is at the optimum size before entering the main herd, improving longevity in the herd. Brett's Heifer Rearer feeds contain high levels of calcium and phosphorus which encourages bone growth and development, helping the foundation frame of the future cow and encouraging the onset of puberty and reproductive cycling. Research has shown that high protein feed promotes good mammary development and prevents fatty tissue depositing in the udder, thus maximising future milking ability.



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