



TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL BREEDING SEASON

With breeding season well under way, here are a few key points to consider for improved fertility performance.

1. Record as much information as possible; bulling dates, sires used, timing of insemination, and days since last calving. The more information you have available to you, the easier it is to understand potential pitfalls or conception problems. This follows through to second round repeats and, if possible, bulling events with stock bulls.
2. If the first three weeks go well, there is a good chance you will have a compact calving next spring. Target 90% of cows to be inseminated by the end of the third week of breeding.
3. Check cows that haven't been noted bulling, this is only possible if you accurately record and witness the bulling behaviour over the course of the day. Heat detection aids are an essential part of this.

4. Positive fertility results are driven by positive body condition score (BCS). Cows which are on a rising level of BCS are proven to be more fertile. A cow's energy intake should not be compromised during the lead up to breeding or the first 6 weeks of the breeding season. Remember to supplement extra for long walks, and difficult weather.

5. Lameness is a critical factor to herd performance, BCS and fertility performance. There is never a bad time to improve roadway surfaces and implement a suitable foot bathing programme. Lameness in bulls can have catastrophic outcomes, so give bulls a thorough examination well in advance of breeding.

6. For all stock bulls, feet and fertility should be checked before the onset of bulling. Avoid sudden nutritional changes before working a bull, this is particularly important to newly purchased stock bulls, try, if possible, to mirror the seller's feeding regime and gradually bring bulls down off a high plane of nutrition before bulling.

KEY STEPS TO BETTER SILAGE

Now is the time to begin a successful winter-feeding plan. High quality silage is incredibly versatile across all production systems and has cost saving implications.

1. Fertiliser application; start with a soil test and manage your P and K application accurately. Never apply lime on grass that is closed for silage, manage soil pH immediately after cutting.
2. Know your intended harvesting date and apply nitrogen in plenty of time to ensure full nitrogen utilisation.
3. Eradicate excess docks and weeds from the sward with a good quality herbicide.
4. Cut in sunny conditions to maximise the sugar content of grass. If using a tedder turn out grass as soon as possible after mowing to maximise the effectiveness.
5. Putting the cover on a silage pit is paramount to the overall silage quality, ideally use two covers, and ensure there is a secure seal on the edges, top and sides.
6. Silage additives, such as Ecosyl, are excellent at ensuring successful fermentation and maximising silage quality, particularly in challenging conditions.



Silage Essentials

Brett's stock a full range of products required for the silage season including:

- Silage wrap and netting
- Ecosyl silage additive

GRASS WATCH

We have commenced our weekly grass sampling and participation in the Grass Watch Programme. The most recent samples in late April indicated a massive variability in grass dry matter, ranging from 12.8 % to 25.7% with an average of 16.3% dry matter in the second rotation. Crude protein levels are also variable, and we are seeing this trend coming through with milk urea levels at the lowest level we have ever seen. A probable cause is that there has been less nitrogen spread this spring and, also the colder weather has resulted in less nitrogen uptake and grass growth.

The table below demonstrates how variable grass is on any given day, the samples were taken across 15 farms on Monday 18th of April.

Grass Watch Report April 18th, 2022

| | Minimum | Average | Maximum |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Dry Matter (%) | 12.8 | 16.3 | 25.7 |
| Crude Protein (%) | 13.6 | 21.2 | 26.3 |
| UFL | 0.9 | 1.0 | 1.1 |
| NDF (%) | 35 | 38 | 40 |
| Oil (%) | 3.1 | 4.4 | 6.3 |

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