

WHAT IS 'SUMMER SCOUR SYNDROME' IN CALVES?

In recent years more farms are running into issues with spring born calves after being turned out to grass. Farmers, vets and nutritionists have been baffled how a herd of super looking calves could be decimated within a few weeks of turnout with severe scour leading to dehydration and rapid weight loss. This has now been called 'Summer Scour Syndrome' and it is something that farmers should be aware of. It is not an infectious illness and as with many calf health issues it can be a case of the combined effect of a few causes tipping things over the edge.

The transitioning of a weaned calf from an indoor environment of a dry, fresh bed with a supply of straw or hay to an outdoor environment of lush, leafy grass that is high in nitrogen and dealing with the outdoor elements is a challenge. If a young animal is stressed their immune system is adversely affected and this can lead to an increased incidence of clinical sickness such as scours and pneumonia. Stressed calves are very prone to picking up coccidiosis and if your farm has a history please do not wait until there are sick calves, discuss a plan with your vet to try get ahead of the problem. Brett's have a range of natural feed additives that can help reduce the risk or onset of coccidiosis, but veterinary intervention is often required.

Weather and sudden changes in diet do increase stress levels and we advise that calves should be in a paddock that offers shelter, supplementation should be appropriate to the grass supply, age and weight of the calves. Feeding calves at the same time every day is useful as a way of herding and checking for the onset of any illness. Offer a form of additional roughage if the grass is very lush and leafy. Young calves also suffer the effects of acidosis, and it is important to choose a feed that includes feed additives to help prevent acidosis.

So in summary 'Summer Scour Syndrome' is a new phenomenon and it describes calves that have a quick turnout to grass and they suffer from some or all of the following - acidosis on high nitrogen grass, scouring symptoms, dehydration, reduced appetite and rapid weight loss.



EXTRA



A Solution for Summer Scour Syndrome - Brett's Ultra Calf Extra Health Package

If your farm has experienced issues in previous years with Summer Scour in calves, ask your Brett's Sales Representative about the Extra Health package that can be included in Ultra Calf Cubes. Based on years of experience our Nutritionist, Heather Peppard, has formulated a unique blend of feed additives to improve the performance of calves at grass. It will help reduce the risk of acidosis and boost the natural immunity of calves as they transition to grass. Ultra Calf Extra contains the product PulmoCX that has been used widely for the last number of years, it helps to provide a natural solution to boosting the calf's ability to cope with coccidia challenge. The health package is growing in popularity for the grazing period when calves are most prone to developing health issues after turnout.

GRASS WATCH

With grass growth in May being recorded as higher than the average there has been a great opportunity to take out surplus paddocks for silage. While weather conditions have been ideal for growing grass the broken weather with persistent showers have made silage harvesting challenging! For all livestock farmers it is critical to take measures to maintain grass quality ahead for June and subsequent months.



Retirement Wishes to Eddie

We would like to congratulate Eddie Cunningham on his retirement after 40 years of service. Eddie started working as a lorry driver in Brett's in 1982 and he has been a familiar face to many of our customers, in particular the tillage farms where he would have collected grain. One of Eddie's main roles was collecting raw materials from the ports which required very early mornings and heading off in all kinds of weather to keep the raw materials in the mill. We thank Eddie for his dedication over his time with us, he was committed to always doing his job in a professional and courteous manner. Eddie was very much a team player and was appreciated by his colleagues and his presence around the yard in Callan will certainly be missed. We would like to wish Eddie and his wife Marie a happy, healthy and fulfilling retirement.



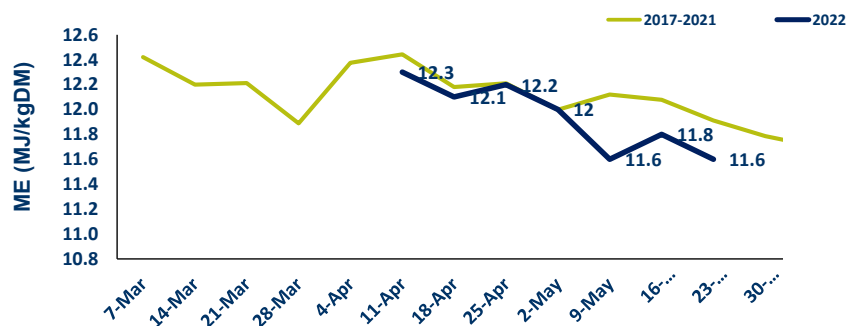
Sean Hogan, Jimmy Brett, Eddie Cunningham and Sean Brett

Trends for 2022

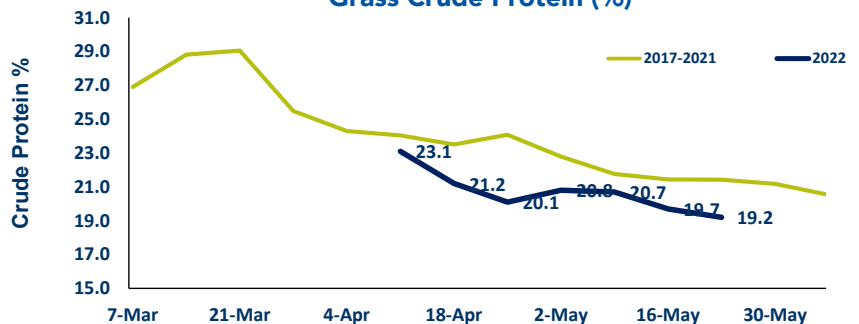
Energy - with the exceptional grass growth the energy (ME or UFL) values in grass have fallen below the average for 2017-2021. This is due to the fact that heavy covers have a higher proportion of fibrous stem relative to sugar and oil which reduces the energy value of the grass.

Grass Protein - The other point to note is that the grass proteins are running lower than the 5-year average, but this is related to lower levels of nitrogen being spread on grazing ground. In the graph the green line is the 5-year average for protein compared to the blue line for 2022 to date. In terms of animal performance there is still adequate protein in the grass to support milk production and liveweight gain.

Grass Metabolisable Energy (MJ/kg/DM)



Grass Crude Protein (%)



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