



HARVEST UPDATE

In late June the harvesting of Winter Barley commenced and marked one of the earliest starts that we can remember. However, July was an extremely difficult month with high volumes of rain leading to atrocious conditions for harvesting Winter Barley and saving straw.

Winter Oil Seed Rape and Winter Oats are now being harvested. We hope that August will see a big improvement in the weather for the remainder of the harvest and that we can forget the challenging conditions in July.

Fodder Outlook

Teagasc conducted a National Fodder Survey of 500 farms in early July. Grass growth in 2023 has been behind the 5-year average for many farms and this has made it difficult to build stocks of silage for next winter. With poor grass growth, many farmers fed silage during the summer which has depleted silage reserves.

In the South East region, it is reported that the majority of farms sampled are on target to have sufficient silage supplies providing that they get their second cuts safely into the pits. But as always there are some worrying trends with 15% of herds reporting that they have less than 40% of their winter feed requirements secured.

Action points for all livestock farms:

- Assess the situation on your own farm – conduct a fodder budget
- Feed extra supplements to build grass covers and take out surplus as bales
- Source straw early for feeding and bedding
- Review stocking rate and sell unproductive stock e.g., lame or high cell count cows
- Offer additional meals to weanling stock to reduce grass demand
- Buy extra fodder (bales/hay/straw/maize silage/beet)
- Consider a forage crop (rape/kale)
- If you require help completing your fodder budget contact your local Bretts Sales Representative or Ruminant Support Specialist

It is important to evaluate how your silage will feed out. Take into account the dry matter (DM), dry matter digestibility and energy content of the forage. Silage at 20% DM will affect how much the animal will eat compared to silage at 30% DM. If you are unsure about the quality of your silage, make sure to get it tested.



With the recent rainfall, grass growth rates have thankfully started to increase again. However, we have noticed with the grass samples taken through the Grass Watch programme there is huge variability. Dry matters (DM) in some cases have decreased to 12.5%.

Also, the energy in the grass varies greatly depending on the type of covers and whether the paddock had been mowed/ topped previously. 15kgs DM of grass is only supporting 18 litres of milk based on the average grass sampled at the end of July. When allocating grass be careful not to overestimate intakes. When grass DMs are low it is easy to fall into the trap of under allocating grass which can cause milk yield drop.



National Fertiliser Register and Database

On July 11th, the Oireachtas passed the legislation on the Veterinary Medicines, Medicated Feed and Fertiliser regulation Act which came into operation on July 24th. This legislation will enforce the recording of all sales of fertiliser and lime from merchants to farmers.

- Professional Fertiliser End Users, which is mainly farmers but also includes landscape gardeners, sports clubs etc must register with the Department of Agriculture on agfood.ie by Friday, September 1st
- From September 1st, the sale of fertiliser and lime from the merchant to farmers will be recorded and linked to customer accounts with a valid herd/cereal grower number and having already pre-registered on DAFM website. From September 1st, it will be legal requirement for merchants to only sell fertiliser to those End Users (farmers) that have registered with DAFM and the merchant will have to submit the data on sales to DAFM
- Farmers and Merchants will also have to declare Closing Stocks (even if it is a zero stock) of fertiliser in September. Farmers will have to record their closing fertiliser stock on September 14th, 2023 and upload this data to the Department of Agriculture by October 15th

Date for your Diary

the
Iverk
SHOW

All roads lead to the Iverk Show in Piltown on Saturday, August 26th. Make sure to call to the Bretts Marquee and say hello to our team!



Summer Scour Syndrome

There are still reports of Summer Scour Syndrome in calves and with recent rainfall and increased grass growth it is a high-risk period. Symptoms include scour, rapid weight loss, weakness and lack of rumination. It is very hard to diagnose as other infections such as coccidiosis and mineral deficiency may show similar signs. The best way to avoid summer scour is to try and prevent it.

- Before turnout ensure the calves are fully weaned off milk and eating at least 1.5 kg of concentrate to aid rumen development
- When turned out to grass offer good quality straw (or hay if straw isn't available) in the diet. A fibrous forage helps rumen function as sometimes the change in diet can cause summer scour. Using an IBC tank full of straw in the field is a simple, cost effective way of allowing access to fibre
- Turn calves out to a paddock that has little or no nitrogen applied as high levels of nitrogen in the grass can upset the calves digestive system
- Select paddocks that have high covers and stemmy grass. Plenty of stemmy grass in early turn out will maintain rumen function and allow the calf to adapt to the new diet

If calves do develop clinical signs of summer scour, it's best to house straight away. Put the calf back on a diet of straw/hay and concentrate and seek veterinary advice where appropriate.

Feed Bretts Ultra Calf Extra cubes if you have a persistent problem with Summer Scour Syndrome. It has a unique blend of rumen buffers and yeast which will help the calves stomach and help maintain rumen function. Remember, prevention is better than cure with summer scour syndrome so avoid stress at weaning and rapid change in diet.

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