



## Dairy Matters for March

Due to high levels of rainfall and poor grazing conditions, there has been a very disappointing start to grazing in February.

This has increased the reliance on silage. It is critical you have enough silage for the remaining housing period so early March is a good time to take stock of forage supplies and demand.

It is important to avoid making rash decisions that will have long term consequences on animal performance.

We must focus on minimising body condition, protecting milk solids and subsequent fertility leading up to the breeding season. Let's hope that March does not live up to its name as a month of many weathers and that a more settled period lies ahead.

### Body condition loss

The key to good fertility in dairy herds is to minimise the loss of body condition in the first six weeks of lactation.

This year, our technical team is noting that many herds are experiencing a rapid loss of body condition and are concerned about the subsequent fall out in terms of fertility.

Our Nutritionist, Heather Peppard, is adamant that many cows are being underfed due to over estimation of grass intakes and inadequate supplementation rates in the parlour relative to milk yield.

The aim is to optimise milk yield and milk solids from grass, while understanding that grass alone cannot supply sufficient energy in early lactation. Good quality silage is very important to maintain energy and dry matter (DM) intake.

Concentrate feed levels should remain flexible and will depend on silage quality, grazing conditions, grass availability, cow body condition and milking ability.



## St. Patrick's Bank Holiday Weekend Reminder...



The spring months are the busiest time for feed deliveries and also for bagged inputs such as fertiliser, seed, milk replacer as well as agrochemicals. With busy delivery schedules for all inputs, please order a longer lead-in time on orders so that we can plan customer delivery schedules to everyone's satisfaction.

This year, Saint Patrick's Day falls on a Sunday (March 17th) followed by a Bank Holiday on Monday, March 18th. We would ask that you would take note of these dates and plan accordingly to get orders in early for all bulk and bagged deliveries to help our team plan the logistics of production.

Active customers for feed with a correct mobile number in our accounts system will receive a text message on approach to busy holiday periods and we would ask for everyone to respond to such reminders in order to avoid disappointment. If you do not currently receive a text, please contact our office on 056 7755300 or inform your Sales Rep.



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## The 5 'Cs' of Successful Calf Rearing

The key to calf rearing is keeping things simple, having a plan and getting the basics right.

**Colostrum** – remember the 1,2,3 rule which is the first feed of colostrum within the first two hours of birth and a minimum of three litres

**Comfort** – calves need a dry, draught free, warm bed with plenty of straw and good ventilation above them

**Consistency** – feed calves at the same time each day and ensure that milk replacer powder is measured accurately and whole milk volumes offered are accurate, check automatic feeders

**Cleanliness** – all milk feeding equipment must be washed daily and anyone visiting the calf shed should have clean boots dipped in disinfectant

**Calories** – calves require daily feed to contribute to daily growth, maintain function and keep warm and hydrated

## SPRING SPECIAL OFFER

**Goldstart Calf Milk Replacer 2 bags free** on every full pallet (1.2 tons or 60 bags) and a **free Portwest Bodywarmer** for all orders delivered this Spring.



### TOP TIP

Measure milk replacer accurately by using a scales and graduated measuring jug

## Welcome, Thomas!



This month we are delighted to give a warm welcome to our newly appointed Senior Agronomist, Thomas Hession. Thomas is an experienced professional hailing from Knocktopher in County Kilkenny where he grew up on a tillage and beef farm.

In 2012, Thomas graduated from UCD with an honours degree in Animal and Crop production. In order to pursue his interest in tillage, Thomas continued his studies at Writtle College by undertaking a postgraduate Diploma in Arable Crop Management from the University of Essex.

On returning to Ireland, Thomas joined Glanbia in 2013 and has spent the past 10 years working as an Agronomist in the North Wexford/East Wicklow region.

Thomas is a qualified pesticide advisor with IASIS and brings great technical knowledge and expertise to our Agronomy team. We know that our tillage customers will benefit greatly from Thomas's experience and advice in the coming months.

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