



Reflecting on a Great Month

Thankfully, October was a great month in terms of weather and provided ideal sowing conditions for winter cereals and the harvesting of Maize Silage. The grass growth for October has been exceptional for the time of year and grazing conditions remained good. However, now is the time to get geared up for the Winter Housing period.

Top Tips to Avoid Stress at Housing

Housing of livestock on a good plane of nutrition should enhance animal performance rather than hinder it. So you should always ask the question: 'Are your animals performing as well as they should indoors?'

If the answer is no, the housing environment may well be the problem. Below is a checklist to ensure you are not using additional feed energy to compensate for poor housing.

- 1. Ventilation** – the house should be full of clean dry air, as it is outdoors. If there is a problem with ventilation, you will notice black smut building up at the points of air entry and exit, excessive cobwebs, and wet floors or bedding.
- 2. Feed space** – a common housing restriction we come upon is limited access to the feed barrier due to overstocking indoors. Table 1 highlights the minimum feed space for various categories of stock.
- 3. Lying and Cubicle space** – we recommend one animal per cubicle and for slatted or straw areas (see Table 2)
- 4. Additional space for bulling** – this is vital for autumn calved dairy and suckler cows. If accessible, cows will express heats safely in a holding yard.
- 5. Dry and transition cows** – before and after calving each cow requires 10m² of straw bedding and individual calving pens require 15m² of straw bedding to minimise stress during calving.
- 6. Water Troughs** – should be checked daily and cleaned out at least twice per week. If the water is dirty the stock will drink less and this affects rumen function.
- 7. Vaccination and parasite control** need to be up to date.
- 8. Weigh animals** – after week 3 of being housed once they have settled into the environment and weigh regularly thereafter.

1. Recommended Feed space for cattle (mm/animal)

Feeding Type	Cow	Finishing Cattle	Light Store Cattle	Weanlings
Concentrates	600-700	600-650	500-600	400-500
Ad lib Silage or TMR Diet Feed	400-500	400-500	250-300	225-300

*TMR = Total Mixed Ration fed through a diet feeder

2. Recommended Housing Space Allowance (m²/head)

Animal Type	Slatted	Straw Bedding
Sucklers	3m ²	4-5m ²
Calves		
Calves <150kgs		1.5m ²
Calves 150 < 220kg		1.7m ²
Weanlings		
Cattle 220 – 300kg	1.2 – 1.5m ²	1.8 – 3m ²
Cattle 310 – 400kg	1.5 – 2m ²	2.4 – 3m ²
Finishing Cattle		
Cattle 550kg	2.2m ²	4m ²
Cattle 600kg	2.4m ²	4m ²
Cattle 650kg	2.5m ²	4m ²
Cattle 700kg	2.6m ²	4m ²
Cattle 750kg	2.7m ²	4m ²



How Much to feed Youngstock and Finishing Beef Animals

Silage quality is fundamental to understanding what type of feed to supplement for the winter period. Silage is always extremely variable in dry matter, protein and DMD%. A silage test is a small investment and gives accurate information when putting a feeding plan in place.

Silage Quality	64 DMD	68 DMD	72+ DMD
Heifers + Steers Finish	8.0+ kg	6.5-7.0kg	5.0 - 6.0 kg
Heifers + Steers Growth	6.0 kg	5.0 kg	4.0 kg
Bulls	Ad Libitum	Ad Libitum	8.0 kg
Weanlings	2.5-3.0 kg	2.0 kg	1 kg-1.5kg

SPECIAL OFFER

Order Bretts PIP Dry Cow minerals now and get **2 BAGS FREE WITH EVERY 1 TON ORDER.**

Contact the office or your Technical Sales Rep for further information on the specifications and prices.



Bretts PIP Dry Cow Mineral is our specifically formulated mineral containing the appropriate balance of vitamins and minerals for cows during the dry period. It can be a confusing time for farmers buying Dry Cow minerals, everyone knows the need for high Magnesium (at least 25% Mg) minerals but there are other critical vitamins and minerals that we pay particular attention to.

Vitamin E: Placental Vitamin E is crucial for calf health and is influenced by a cow's intake of vitamin E in the last 6 weeks of pregnancy. During the dry period, each cow requires around 30,000 IU of vitamin E — equal to at least 700 IU per day over six weeks. Adequate vitamin E is vital for developing healthy calf embryos, supporting strong heart, lung and muscle formation. Ensuring correct vitamin E levels in dry cow diets helps reduce the risk of stillbirths and heart failure at birth.

Vitamin D3: Vitamin D3 regulates calcium absorption and mobilisation, helping ensure easier calving, faster recovery, and fewer cases of milk fever or displaced abomasum. While cows can store vitamin D for about three months, winter forages are low in D3, so supplementation is needed.

Selenium: Selenium, like vitamin E, acts as an antioxidant and supports cow and calf immunity. Cows fed protected selenium produce calves with strong heart, lung and muscle development, reducing the risk of stillbirths and weak calves. Organic selenium yeast also helps prepare the mammary gland for the next lactation and lowers the risk of mastitis.

Phosphorus: Dry cows need about 30g of phosphorus per day from forage and minerals. As phosphorus levels in grass and silage are variable and in recent years have fallen, it's vital to use a high-phosphorus mineral (over 3%). Adequate phosphorus helps prevent milk fever and slow calving.

Biotin & Protected Zinc: Biotin supports liver function during the dry period, helping prepare cows for the next lactation and reducing the risk of ketosis, especially in well-conditioned cows. When combined with protected zinc, it strengthens the hoof structure, improving hardness and reducing lameness in the next lactation.

Seaweed Minerals: Seaweed minerals increase the bioavailability of trace minerals, particularly iodine. When combined with protected copper, they help boost calf health and overall mineral balance in the cow.

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Callan, Co. Kilkenny
Tel: 056 7755300

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Windgap, Co. Kilkenny
Tel: 051 648204

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Ardfinnan, Co. Tipperary
Tel: 052 7466208

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Portlawn, Co. Waterford
Tel: 051 387396

www.brettbrothers.ie



Brett Brothers Limited



@brettbrothersltd



@Brettbrothers