



All things Grass at Irish Farmers Journal Silage Event

Our team were delighted to exhibit at the recent Grass 2026 event, hosted by the Irish Farmers Journal, in Cuffesgrange, Co. Kilkenny.

There was a great buzz and it was wonderful to welcome so many to our stand and to meet customers from across the region. The blue sky and ideal conditions really improved the mood of everyone in attendance.

The main talking point on our stand was around our new Grass Seed range which is now available from any of our branches.

Thankfully we have had a welcome turn around in the weather and it is great to see livestock out, grass growing and field work progressing. The sowing of Maize and Grass Seeds are a welcome sight!



GOLD SWARD EXTEND			
Inclusion Rate	Variety	Type	Heading Date
2.7 kg	AberGain	Late Tetraploid	4th June
3.0 kg	GraceHill	Late Tetraploid	4th June
3.7 kg	AberChoice	Late Diploid	11th June
2.0 kg	Ballyvoy	Late Diploid	3rd June
0.6 kg	Aberswan	Medium Leaf Clover	
12.0 kg			

GOLD SWARD			
Inclusion Rate	Variety	Type	Heading Date
3.2 kg	Banbridge	Intermediate Tetraploid	26th May
3.2 kg	Glenfield	Late Tetraploid	3rd June
5.0 kg	AstonConqueror	Intermediate Diploid	27th May
0.3 kg	Dungloe	Medium Leaf Clover	
0.3 kg	Clodagh	Large Leaf Clover	
12.0 kg			

For further information or any support on grassland management please contact our Agronomist Paul Colgan, 087 4332528.

Key Tips for a Successful Breeding Season

With the breeding season underway on dairy farms, the following points are key to achieving strong fertility performance:

1. This year farmers had a very compact calving season and this was due to a successful first month of breeding in 2025. If the first three weeks go well, a compact calving period next spring is likely. With this in mind the key is to aim to have 90% of cows inseminated by the end of week three.
2. Keep good records and pay close attention to cows that haven't been seen bulling. This requires consistent observation throughout the day, supported by effective heat detection aids. For cows that have not been seen bulling the advice is to seek veterinary assistance or get a scan on cows.
3. Positive fertility results are strongly linked to body condition score (BCS). Cows on a rising plane of nutrition and improving BCS are more likely to hold to service. Energy intake should not be compromised in the lead up to the breeding season or during the first six weeks. Supplementation may be required during periods of increased demand, such as long walking distances or poor weather.
4. Lameness has a significant impact on herd performance, BCS and fertility. Maintaining good roadway conditions and implementing an effective foot bathing programme are essential.
5. Beware of relying on stock bulls. All stock bulls should have their feet and fertility checked in advance of breeding. A lame bull can severely impact herd fertility results as it reduces their ability to mount cows. Avoid sudden dietary changes, particularly for newly purchased bulls. Where possible maintain a similar feeding regime to the previous system and gradually adjust nutrition before the breeding season.
6. Trace mineral nutrition (Copper, Selenium, Zinc, Iodine etc) gets a lot of focus at breeding, these are required in milligrams per cow per day. If there is a mineral deficiency on the farm speak to your vet or any of our Technical Sales team.
7. Phosphorus is an important macro mineral that is needed in abundance as it is required for milk production. Approximately 18 grams of Phosphorus is required to maintain a dairy cow and then 2 grams per extra litre of milk produced. Therefore, a cow producing 25 litres of milk requires almost 70 grams of Phosphorus per day through grass, silage and minerals in the feed. Phosphorus levels can be checked by blood sampling cows or testing for phosphorus in the Bulk Milk tank. Bretts Supreme Breeder Cubes are fortified with additional phosphorus.

Transitioning Calves to Grass

This is the time of year for transitioning weaned calves to grass. Farmers, vets and nutritionists are baffled as to how a healthy group of calves could be decimated within weeks of turnout with severe scour that leads to dehydration and rapid weight loss.

We advise customers to transition weaned calves to grass slowly and to keep long fibre in the diet. Farmers that have adopted this practice have reported a noticeable improvement in thrive with less 'sick calves and unexplained scours'.

- Introduce **Bretts Ultra Calf 18% Cubes** before turnout. Calves should be eating at least 1.5-2.0 kgs per day and as our calf cubes include a rumen buffer this helps to reduce the risk of acidosis.
- Choose a paddock near the yard and one that has not received an application of nitrogen in the previous 4 weeks, or consider grazing a Multi Species Sward which has higher fibre content.
- Keep the group size small.
- Transition calves to grass slowly over a few weeks, preferably grazing by day, and offer access to a roofed sheltered area at night or a paddock with hedging for shelter.
- Feed calves at the same time every day and while herding check for the onset of illness.
- Do not reduce concentrate feed levels for the first month after turnout, even if the weather is 'good' the DM of grass is low compared to the indoor diet.
- Ensure access to clean fresh drinking water at all times.
- Offer straw as a consistent source of roughage.

Product Focus

Supreme Breeder Cubes 14% fortified with Extra Phosphorus

In late April some herds experienced a crash in butter fat which is usually linked to fast growing grass that has a high oil level and lower fibre content, which is high risk for depressing butterfat.

Bretts Supreme Breeder Cubes offer a nutritional solution to minimise the extent of the butterfat drop on lush leafy grass.

As standard, these cubes include our **Performance Improvement Pack (PIP)** of protected minerals, biotin and essential oils to improve the utilisation of grass protein. In addition, they include extra fibre sources and are fortified with higher levels of phosphorus, rumen buffers and yeasts.



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.,
Portlaw, Co. Waterford
Tel: 051 387396