



FEEDING THE ANIMALS THAT FEED THE COUNTRY

I am proud of the way in which our teams have been able to keep the mills running and delivering the feed over the last two months while the country has had some major challenges.

Our primary focus is to keep our customers and staff safe and well. So we have successfully adapted our processes and procedures very quickly, altering shift patterns where necessary, segregating departments, along with various staff working from home. This has enabled the staff remaining on our sites to spread out and effectively socially distance.

We have had to carry out fewer farm visits and face-to-face meetings as we comply with social distancing and stay at home guidelines. While we are still making visits by appointment and ensuring full social distancing, we have placed an even greater emphasis on technology for communication to ensure we remain in contact and up-to-date with both customers and colleagues.

As we are all part of the food chain, it is essential that we all work together and we have used this time positively to further improve and update our work practises to be even more efficient and environmentally responsible.

We would like to thank all of our customers for their patience and flexibility as we work through these challenging times together. We are beginning to see a clear path to return to normality but until we do please be rest assured that at Massey Feeds, we will continue work with you to feed the animals that feed the country.



Kynan Massey

ADVANCED MINERAL PREMIX FOR INCREASED EFFICIENCY

In the latest development to supply science-based, highly efficient dairy compounds, we are the first compounder in the UK to remove inorganic sulphates from our dairy mineral premixes. This move will improve rumen performance and efficiency of trace element nutrition.

We believe our customers cows deserve the most efficient feeds. For many years we have pushed the boundaries with the development of our dairy compounds. The FIMLAC range remains the only dairy compound formulated to optimise the utilisation of protein. More recently we have added pHix-UP which is proven to be a highly effective rumen buffer. Dairy cows require trace elements in the most bioavailable form and in a way that allows the rumen to function as effectively as possible. Inorganic mineral sources, particularly sulphates, have formed the basis of mineral premixes for many years but while cheap, they fall down in terms of performance.

Sulphates are very reactive in the rumen which reduces their bioavailability while at the same time the free metal which is released harms rumen microbes. It is totally illogical that copper sulphate which is used as an anti-microbial in foot baths is also used as a mineral source in diets. If it kills bugs in a footbath, what will it do in the rumen?

The impact of sulphates in the rumen is significant because they have been shown to reduce the efficiency of fibre digestion so compromising the use of forage.

Many mineral premixes combine organic chelated minerals alongside inorganic sources to progressively reduce the use of inorganic trace minerals, but we are proud to have become the first compounder in the UK to remove inorganic sulphate sources completely.

Better performance

Our premixes now contain chelated organic sources and Intellibond hydroxy minerals from Trouw Nutrition GB, meaning we have removed sulphates completely. This will improve the overall bioavailability of trace elements reducing the proportion that is excreted while preventing any negative effects on fibre digestibility and utilisation of forage. Intellibond hydroxy minerals are insoluble in the rumen and are more effectively absorbed in the intestines.

By removing inorganic sulphates we can ensure our premixes deliver exceptional bioavailability and ensure dairy cows receive the most effective mineral nutrition.

The newly formulated premixes will be included in the FIMLAC range of dairy compounds as well as in youngstock dry cow and sheep premixes.

For more information, speak to your Feed Specialist.



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FARMING THOUGHTS



Never in our lifetime have we seen anything like the catastrophic effect of the Covid 19 pandemic, with the UK taking the brunt of it with the highest mortality figures within Europe at the time of writing.

The effects of the virus have been felt across the country with lockdown and furloughs in place for some workplaces. With unemployment set to rise, the knock-on effect to the economy will be felt for years to come.

British agriculture has coped very well as an industry under the circumstances, despite the fact that milk prices have been hit, some harder than others, and finished cattle prices have come under pressure largely due to the closure of the food service and hospitality sectors.

As the pendulum has swung down for farm incomes, many of the costs that directly affect these businesses have swung the other way. Since April the raw material market has increased dramatically, with prices hyped up and affected by the uncertain markets and availability from the shippers. Hopefully these markets will settle down as lockdown starts to come to an end.

We are a company that prides itself on 'Feeding the animals that feed the country'. This has never been more true than over the last three months. We have worked to keep things running as usual and are indebted to the mill staff, customer service team and first class delivery service which we are grateful for at this challenging time. From the sales team, despite not always been able to visit your farm we have aimed to stay in touch as much as possible over the phone, by text, WhatsApp, Snapchat and the occasional Zoom meeting. Please let's keep talking and looking at ways to move forward from a very difficult situation.

The June Feedtalk is another way we can keep you in touch with what we are doing at Massey Feeds and ways to exploit the potential on your farm to keep you one step ahead. Stay safe!



Phil Stirk
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TIME TO THINK ABOUT RESEEDING

Understandably all farmers are keeping a close eye on costs in the current price squeeze. But it is important to understand the risk and the reward when deciding on reducing costs or making an investment, and this is particularly true with reseeding grassland.

To produce quality forage efficiently, it is important that leys are in good order. The wet winter and early spring took its toll of the quality of many grassland swards, meaning that reseeding or renovation should be considered. The easy thing to do is say that it will cost around £650/ha for a full reseed, money which could be saved this year. But is the risk associated with that decision and what are the potential rewards?

The risk is that pastures will be less productive. Comparing a field which is 95% perennial

ryegrass with one that is 50%, the high ryegrass sward will produce, on average 6.5tDM/ha more per year and will be higher energy, 12.0MJ compared with 10.8. This is enough extra energy to produce an extra 12000 litres from forage per year, worth £3360/ha at 28ppl.

Reseeded pastures will improve yields, boost dry matter intakes of grass with greater palatability and digestibility and produce better quality feed. The rewards are significant.

Is a reseed needed? – Those farmers who plate meter will build up a record of Dry Matter yields of their paddocks and can see those which are not performing. If you don't use a plate meter, regularly walking your farm and accessing fields for weed infestation, level of sown species of grasses remaining (60% or less), sward density and signs of soil structure problems will highlight where action is required.



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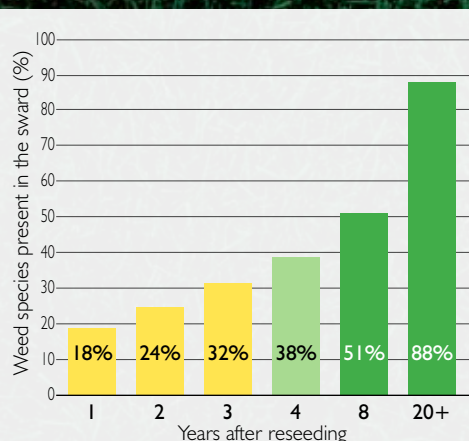
RYEGRASS NOT WEED GRASS

"The best way to get the most from your grass is to maintain young, well-managed ryegrass-based (+/- clover) swards, by regularly reseeding or overseeding." says Roger Bacon from Barenbrug.

By selecting the right grass seed products for your farm; and reseeding regularly, it is possible to have a major impact on milk and meat production costs. A reseeding rate of just 10% is enough to prevent a decline in grass productivity and a 15% rate will start to deliver real gains. Conversely, fields that are not reseeded will quickly become overrun with weed species and productivity will quickly decline.

Another way to look at the numbers is to assess the amount of dry matter produced. A field that is 50% ryegrass and 50% weed grasses will not be as productive as a young sward. The graph shows that just one year after reseeding, weed species can make up to 18% of a sward. After four years, that figure has more than doubled to 38% and, after eight years, weeds will be starting to dominate the sward (51%).

On average, an eight-year old field will typically yield around 5.5T DM/ha compared with a new reseed which could produce around 15T DM/ha. With the typical cost of a full reseed being around £650/ha and the value of extra dry matter being £140/t, the 9.5 tonnes extra DM/ha will be worth £1330/ha giving an excellent return on investment, more than paying for the cost of reseeding in the first year and ensuring more from forage for years to come.



PLANNING FOR QUALITY SECOND CUT

Following the dry weather in April and May, many farmers I have spoken to are concerned that second cuts will not be as heavy as expected and should they wait to let crops bulk up before taking second cut?. My advice is that the main thing you should aim for is quality and if this means taking a lighter crop then so be it.

Once grass starts to go to head, quantity does not increase but quality will certainly decline. So there is no point chasing quantity. Take second cut on time making sure it is as high quality as possible.

This will also improve the likelihood of good third and fourth cuts to make up any deficit in quantity.

Grass quality deteriorates as the year progresses. Even if management remains consistent, with every attempt made to keep the fourth cut as good as the first, it unfortunately will not be.

This is due to the natural behaviour of grass species increasing in NDF and the reduction in day light hours after the summer equinox.

You will not beat it however hard you try, but there are steps you can take to help make the best quality feed you can.

Wilting

Grass dries significantly faster if you move it, so aim to get the tedder in the field within 3 hours of cutting. By cutting in the morning and tedding it, you will maximise wilt within the first 6hrs, utilising the heat of the midday sun. After 6hrs, the grasses pores begin to close in self-defence, slowing the rate of wilting. A morning cut approach is far better than evening, where the grass sits on wet soil all night rotting rather than wilting.

Cutting Dates

A delay of seven days in the optimum cutting date can lead to a reduction in energy content of 0.5 MJ/Kg DM, reducing the overall energy available from the forage. Assuming a forage intake of 10KgDM per cow per day this would add up to approximately 5MJ difference in energy from forage, equivalent to losing a litre per cow per day from forage..

For a 150 cow herd housed for six months of the year and a milk price of 28ppl this equates to £7,560 in lost milk sales through the housed period.

So it really pays to focus on quality when planning your second and subsequent cuts.



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YIELDS FROM THE FIELD

Maintaining milk yield and quality is a priority, especially this year. Grazing management must remain a key focus, especially if late lactation cows are being challenged to produce more from grazed grass.

Understanding the grazing potential is key as throughout the season grass growth, quality and potential dry matter intakes will all vary.

Measuring grass is the only way to really know what is in front of the cows and it lets you plan buffer and supplementary feeding accurately. Turn cows into paddocks when grass covers are 2800kgDM/ha and take them out when residual covers are 1500kgDM/ha. Managing covers is important as it encourages more rapid regrowth and keeps grass at the higher quality three leaf stage.

With the grass measurement figures from plate meter readings you can calculate the number of feeds each field can provide ensuring there is no waste grass and no shortfall in dry matter intakes.

Calculating the daily intake and energy supply from grazing you can then more accurately assess the need for buffer feeding as growth declines during the season. You want buffer feed to complement grazing, not displace it.

With the correct grassland management dry matter intake from forage can be increased supporting a higher M+ from grazing, allowing you to potentially reduce additional concentrate feed to help maintain margins despite lower milk prices.

For more information on how to keep grazing delivering, speak to your Feed Specialist.



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MARKET FOCUS KEY TO COST-EFFECTIVE LAMB FEEDING

Setting clear objectives for when lambs will be sold will be crucial if margins are to be maximised in the current turbulent market.

The lamb market is likely to remain unpredictable for the foreseeable future.

Exports will be affected by less demand from the EU around Ramadan and live markets are going to continue to be disrupted due to social distancing requirements. Prices will also react as supply of new crop lambs increase.

Know your market

With uncertain markets it will be vital to make sure lambs are reared as cost-effectively as possible, which means identifying the target market and then feeding to hit that market and the specification must be a high priority. There is no point targeting an early finish and not investing in growth rates. Equally, if you are planning to sell later in the season with most growth from grass you don't want to be providing too much supplementary feeds.

If grass quality is good it will pay to push single lambs on to market them early, so relieving the pressure of grass for the rest of the season. By planning now, it will be possible to get lambs finishing early and hitting specification cost effectively.

Most of a lamb's growth is in the first eight weeks and is influenced by the quantity and quality of ewe milk supply. Lambs that grow better in that period tend to carry on growing quicker. A 70kg ewe rearing two lambs and producing 3kg of milk needs 32MJ/day to produce high quality milk and maintain body condition.

Ewes reach peak production 3-4 weeks after lambing so need to be fed to allow them to achieve this. Watch ewes closely and make sure they are producing enough milk. If yields are low, lambs can damage the teats leading to mastitis.

Supplementation

At present grass growth is good in most areas, but if grass growth drops back you need to make a decision whether to supplement the ewe with concentrate to maintain milk supply, or to feed the lamb to take pressure off the ewe. Grass needs to be at least 4cm tall but that peak intakes are achieved when grass is 8cm tall, equivalent to 2000kgDM/ha.

To promote high growth rates in lambs targeted for early finishing, look to introducing creep feed 2-3 weeks after turnout, although intakes of creep and grass will only start to rise after six weeks.

A 10kg lamb requires 10MJ/day. Provided the ewe is producing sufficient milk, around 65% of the energy will be supplied from milk leaving 3.5MJ required from grass and supplementary feeds. By introducing creep early, they will be eating plenty of solid feeds before weaning at around 12 weeks.

Quality of creep feed is also important if growth rates are to be maximised. He says young lambs are very efficient converter of feed into meat, but feed conversion is affected by quality. Switching to a cheap creep is a false economy.

Fed a high-quality creep, lambs can achieve a feed conversion (FCE) of 5:1 but this can fall to 8:1 with a lower quality creep. While lower quality feeds can look better value, often around £50/t cheaper, this benefit soon disappears if lambs fail to hit optimum growth rates leading to later sale or missing specification.

Quality for growth

Creep at £250/t achieving a FCE of 5:1 will cost £1.25/kg liveweight gain whereas a creep at £200/t delivering a poorer 8:1 FCE will cost £1.60/kg liveweight gain. Younger lambs will convert feed more efficiently and therefore will be more economical.

Managing to get a proportion of lambs off early will give cash flow a boost while also meaning more grass for later finished lambs, helping make the best of volatile market conditions.



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TRUCK RUN SUPPORTS THE NHS

Everyone appreciates the tremendous, tireless work being carried out by all in the NHS.

To show their support and to raise funds for NHS charities a group of truck drivers, including our own Dave Gornall, took part in a truck run organised by Craig Booth from Dugdales

The run around Clithero and ending at the hospital on 23rd April raised over £4000. Dave who is based at our Preston Mill says: "It was great to do someone which would directly benefit all in the NHS. We may not have raised as much as Captain Tom but we were pleased to play our part."



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