



## PLAN NOW FOR A MORE SUCCESSFUL WINTER



**Dai Lewis**  
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**When the total costs of producing forages and buying the purchased feeds to supplement them are taken into account, feeding cows remains the biggest single cost of dairy farming. With thoughts turning to winter diets, what can be done to improve the return on feed costs this year?**

### Assess forage stocks

Working out how much forage you have got is the fundamental starting point for cost-effective rations. If you want to feed 12kgDM of forage per day and that on average your silages are 35%DM, you will require 6.12 tonnes per cow for a 180 day winter, so 612 tonnes of usable forage per 100 cows. Get clamps measured so you know what your starting position is and how much you can actually feed and ensure stocks will last the winter.

### Get all forage analysed now

Initial results from Trouw Nutrition show both first and second cuts have similar dry matter and NDF levels but lignin is higher due to the mild wet winter that saw continuous grass growth. Energy levels are good averaging 11.4MJ/kg/DM while protein contents are lower than average at around 14.5%.

Rumen health will be a possible concern as the balance of rapidly fermented carbohydrates and protein varies considerably. In addition, low fibre indices and high acid loads mean the potential acidosis risk could be higher in some cases.

While averages are useful for recognising trends, they do not describe what is in your clamps.

If you haven't had your silages analysed yet, talk to your Feed Specialist and get it done as soon as possible and then analyse clamps regularly because the analysis will vary as you work through the silage clamps.

### Target the correct cows

When formulating diets and deciding on what yield levels to achieve, are you targeting feed at the correct animals that can deliver the performance required? Is the best forage going to the most deserving cows? Pushing the cows that can deliver and avoiding over-feeding others will have the biggest single impact on your herd's milk from forage levels and overall margin levels.

### Balance diets to complement forage

Are the animals being provided with the correct nutrition to allow them to produce the required level of performance that will optimise the return on investment? Are you using the optimum levels of home-grown feed and forages? When devising diets, look beyond cost per tonne because the only number that matters is the cost per litre. The cheapest option isn't always the best, as reduced performance can soon mean the cost per unit of output is greater than if a higher priced but higher quality product was fed.

### Plan to reduce waste

All feed, whether purchased or home produced is expensive, yet every year huge quantities are wasted. Losses may manifest themselves as spoilage in the silage clamp or storage losses of bought in feed between when delivered and when fed.

Losses can also occur through inaccurate loading of the feeder wagon and waste at the feed trough.

Investing the time now identifying how to reduce losses, perhaps by changing how you manage the silage face or how you store purchased feeds could help reduce your total feed costs by ensuring more of what you producer or buy is actually fed.

### Set targets and monitor

Standard management advice is that if you don't measure you cannot monitor and if you do not monitor you cannot manage. And it is true. Set yourself targets, key performance indicators and benchmarks and then monitor performance. There are ways we can help. We can provide costings for your herd to help highlight things that are going well and areas that can be targeted for improvement. We can reconcile the feed that has been used and help reduce any areas of wastage. We can regularly analyse your silages to make sure the diet is cost-effectively balanced to keep your herd on target and maximise margins.

**To find out how we can improve your herd performance this winter, talk to your feed specialist.**



# FARMING THOUGHTS

## INVESTING IN THE FUTURE.

All progressive businesses need to continually invest in young people for the future. At Massey Feeds, we are no different. Harnessing hardworking / committed young people with experienced and knowledgeable staff has been a key driver within our sales team.

We have used the opportunity since lockdown back in March to develop the skills base in our sales teams at Holmes Chapel and Preston, equipping them to help you meet the challenges you face on farm. Sales training courses along with technical training provided by our suppliers have been invaluable as we move back to advising on farm again.

All Feed Specialists offering nutritional advice now have to be registered as Feed Advisory Registered with the AIC and I am delighted to say that all the Massey Feeds team are accredited. We also have a number of specialists who are Cow Signals certified, which is a great addition to the service we can provide to customers.

We have sponsored a number of young people through Diploma, degree and masters courses at Harper Adams University. We feel it is important to provide that extra education for people in our industry at this level.

Our commitment to training and development does not end at home. Despite the growth within the poultry industry within the last few years there is a serious shortage of new entrants. Morrisons integrated egg production and packing business Chippendales has teamed up with Bishop Burton Agricultural College to create the British Egg Academy, a new teaching venture established to encourage new entrants into the egg laying industry ([www.bishopburton.ac.uk/subjects/agriculture/british-hen-laying-academy](http://www.bishopburton.ac.uk/subjects/agriculture/british-hen-laying-academy)).

We have committed to support this initiative for the next 12 months. We see this as a crucial way to helping young students see the potential of making a career in the poultry industry. We are pleased to be associated with this venture and have offered to provide practical, onsite visits and teaching where necessary.



**Phil Stirk**  
Sales Director  
07787 104 565

## HOW IMPORTANT IS YOLK COLOUR TO YOUR EGG SALES?

**Achieving a consistent and appropriate level of egg yolk colour can have a big impact on egg sales, so selecting the correct feed is an important decision.**

Most large feed manufacturers cater for the mass market, with diets formulated to produce eggs with the pale yolk colour that supermarkets require.

But for producers looking to supply niche markets or retailing their own eggs the requirement is for a darker yolk, helping to differentiate the product from the mass market. Many free range egg consumers believe that the dark yolk is a sign of a healthy hen. At the same time, it is critical that yolk colour is consistent and does not vary between loads of feed.

Massey Feeds produce laying hen feed with enough pigment to provide a nice dark yellow yolk with a Roche score of about 12. The pigment is set at this level as it is acceptable for most producers. However, we can also cater for producers looking for a darker, more orangey than yellow yolk.

The Massey Feeds range of diets is now available with various levels of yolk pigment.

Although there is an extra cost, producers currently using the feeds say the extra cost is far outweighed by the point of difference it gives to their product and the loyalty it creates with their customers.

**If you would like more information on varying yolk colour, talk to your feed specialist.**



**Stuart Hinchly**  
Monogastric Sales Manager  
07435554891



## REFOCUS AHEAD OF AUTUMN CALVING

**With many herds moving to autumn block calving, now is the time to think about the management actions you can make to optimise health and performance and minimise losses.**

- Immediately after the birth, disinfect the newborn calf's navel using a tincture of iodine or antibiotic spray.
- Milk the colostrum within one hour of birth, working as cleanly as possible, and always evaluate it for quality. Use your refractometer as often as possible even if it has been good previously. Freeze surplus good quality colostrum so you avoid using any which is poor quality.

- When transporting newborn calves, be sure to use a clean and disinfected calf taxi. This can increase disease transmission by 300%.
- Place the newborn calf in a clean and disinfected single-calf hutch that has been empty for a least one week following cleaning and disinfection.
- Make sure the pens contains a thick layer of clean straw, to keep them dry and the reduce risk of pneumonia.
- Give each calf its own (numbered) teat bucket, which stays with them at all times.
- Clean and disinfect each teat bucket every day. Disinfect the brush between every bucket/use as a dirty brush is a vector for spreading disease.



**Will McNeice**  
Ruminant Sales Specialist  
07788 440618



## DON'T NEGLECT EWES PRE-TUPPING

**Ensuring ewes are in good condition pre-tupping will have a big impact on the next lamb crop.**

Lowland ewes normally have a body condition score (BCS) of around 2.5 at weaning and will need to increase weight to achieve the target BCS of 3.5 at mating. Hill ewes have a BSC of 2 at weaning, aiming for 2.5 at mating. One condition score equates to 10% of the ewe's optimal weight, meaning a 70kg ewe would need to gain around 7kgs of bodyweight to meet its target.

Over fat or thin ewes never perform well, may take longer to come on heat and have a poor ovulation rate leading to poor scans, with fewer lambs.

Lambs should be weaned in good time to allow the ewe to recover condition in time for mating so aim for a minimum of 10 weeks for this.

Group ewes after weaning based on their BCS and give them an appropriate amount of grass or additional feed if too thin. Massey Feeds Progrow nuts are an ideal feed for this purpose. Ewes with a BCS of less than two should be examined for worms, bad teeth, poor feet or other diseases.

Flushing these ewe, putting them on a rising plane of nutrition prior to tupping for two to six weeks depending on their condition can improve lambing performance. The science behind flushing is to bring the follicles to maturity and ovulation prior to tupping.

If ewes have a high BCS they should have restricted intakes to help them lose condition. However, this needs to be managed carefully because if ewes don't have enough feed to cover maintenance, you risk the potential development of the foetus.

Ewes in good condition, especially high prolific ewes which should be maintained at the correct BCS should have good ovulation rates and performance cannot be improved by flushing.

**Massey Feeds have a range of feed, buckets and blocks to help get their ewes in the right condition for tupping. Please speak to your Feed Specialist.**



**Paul Drake**  
Beef and Sheep Commercial Manager  
07900 270 233



## TIME TO CONDITION SCORE YOUR COWS

**Most milk buyers now require cows to be condition scored on a quarterly basis, but it will also provide valuable management information about your herd.**

Body condition scores (BCS) are an indirect estimate of energy balance and is a simple technique to assess how thin or fat a cow is on a scale of 1 to 5 (see table below), and is a practical way of assessing the impact of negative energy balance.

It is the change in score which is most important with the target of cows losing no more than 0.5 BCS in the first 60 days of lactation. Excessive BCS at calving is associated with ketosis and fatty liver that can lead to reduced fertility. Cows that lose less than 0.5 BCS between calving and 60 days, on average ovulate 15 days sooner and are served 14 days earlier than cows which lost more than 1.0 BCS.

The other critical stage is late lactation. You don't want dry cows gaining condition so assess condition score at 100 days before drying off and review their diet to make sure they dry off in optimum condition. Then when dry they can be on a diet to maintain condition while achieving good rumen fill.

All our Feed Specialists are trained in Body Condition Scoring so ask us about scoring your herd.



**Rob Chell**  
Area Manager Staffordshire and Shropshire  
07817 253717

Stage of lactation	Target Score
At calving	2.5-3.0
60 days post calving	2.0-2.5
100 days before drying off	2.5-3.0
At drying off	2.5-3.0



# PLAN NOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF MAIZE

**Having invested in a maize crop, grown it and harvested it, it is essential to make sure as much as possible is actually fed. And this means reducing waste.**

On average, around 15% of maize silage is wasted every year due to aerobic spoilage and heating. This wasted feed value must be replaced, reducing margins. So, a focus on reducing waste can bring big benefits.

The good thing is that we know what causes wastage, which means we can take action to reduce the problem. Heating and aerobic spoilage is the result of the action of yeasts and moulds which are present on silage and which become active in the presence of oxygen. To reduce the spoilage we need to reduce the number and activity of the yeasts and moulds.

To keep air out, good clamp management is essential. Use new plastic sheets and an oxygen barrier and ensure all sheets are well weighted down. Good consolidation is also crucial which can be difficult if crops are harvested too dry - over 35%DM.



Then we need to reduce the activity of yeasts and moulds and this is where inoculants containing heterofermentative bacteria can really help.

Magniva Platinum Maize inoculants contain two specially selected bacteria which work together to significantly reduce aerobic spoilage. During the fermentation they produce antifungal compounds that significantly reduce the yeasts and moulds that cause heating, improving immediate aerobic stability, meaning clamps can be opened safely much sooner. They also improve longer term aerobic stability, protecting the silage while the clamp is open.

By reducing the populations of both yeasts and moulds, the antifungal compounds produced by Magniva Platinum inoculants reduce the main cause of the clamp heating and losing energy. Only inoculants containing heterofermentative strains reduce yeasts and moulds.

Once the clamp is opened, air quickly penetrates the crop. In a well-consolidated clamp, air will penetrate beyond the face up to a one metre but this can increase to four metres in inadequately consolidated clamps. So make sure you only uncover a small amount of the clamp, moving across the face quickly, using a block cutter to retain a tight face.

Using a Magniva Platinum inoculant will help make sure to make the most of your maize this year.

**For more information, talk to your feed specialist.**



**Dawn Jones**  
07787 104 558

## COME TO OUR MAIZE SAMPLING DAYS

Bring a sample maize plant and we will analyse it and see if it is ready for harvest.

**Wednesday 16th September 2020** - 11am - 3pm at Holmes Chapel Mill

**Thursday 17th Sept 2020** - 11am - 3pm Preston Mill

Discuss your results with us over a buffet.

## NEW LOOK FOR MONOGASTRIC TEAM

**We are delighted to announce two new appointments to our monogastric team which will build on our already strong position in the pig and poultry sectors.**

Stuart Hinchly joins us as Monogastric Sales Manager, bringing over 30 years' experience in the industry, not only on the feed side but on the practical side too. After University he joined ADAS as a poultry adviser and went on to run the Poultry Unit at the NAC Stoneleigh before rejoining ADAS as a pig and poultry advisor.

Missing the practical side of the industry, Stuart moved on to manage egg production units for a family concern in the North West and then Daylay (now Noble Foods). He was promoted within the Company to become an Area Farms Manager for Premier Poultry (Now 2

Sisters), running 19 broiler farms before gaining turkey experience in Norfolk where he was responsible for rearing heavy stags and birds for Christmas.

For the last 15 years he has worked in the North West mainly with HST Feeds.

Ian Mackinson joins the team as Monogastric Technical Manager. A graduate of Nottingham University, his first full time role was in the animal health division of Cyanamid of Great Britain working on the development of zootechnical additives. Following this he joined Pauls Agriculture as a Nutritionist in the North West region, working at their mills in Cheshire and Lancashire. During this time he gained invaluable experience of the operation of multi species feed mills and was responsible for formulating feeds and quality control.

Since 1993 he has been a commercial poultry nutritionist in the premix industry, spending over 20 years working for Premier Nutrition supporting feed compounders and poultry farmers in the UK.

He specialises in working closely with customers to provide detailed nutrition advice and commercial support across all poultry and gamebirds.



**Stuart Hinchly**  
Monogastric Sales  
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**Ian Mackinson**  
Monogastric Technical  
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[www.masseyfeeds.co.uk](http://www.masseyfeeds.co.uk)

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