

Drive Performance, Minimise Substitution

By Brian Delaney (Beef Specialist)

As autumn approaches - sugars, energy and dry matter in grass could start to decline reducing performance in beef animals on grass only diets. Research has shown that when concentrates are used in a manner that minimises substitution of grass, overall total dry matter intake increases. An increase in overall intake results in improved efficiency, performance and overall profit margins.

Where there is plenty of good quality grazed grass available, concentrate feeding rates of 0.5kg per 100kg liveweight can be fed without having any negative effect on grass intakes. Levels should be increased where good quality grass is in short supply. Increasing overall dry matter intake, without reducing grass intake will greatly help to increase performance.

Approximately 80% of intake goes towards maintenance i.e. keeping the animal warm and ensuring normal everyday function. The final 20% of intake drives performance i.e. increasing weight gain while driving growth & development. The final 20% of intake essentially drives profit margins. Just a 5% drop in intake can reduce performance by 25%. Therefore, ensuring high dry matter intakes will maximize performance & minimize substitution.

Super Bull Nuts or Hi Maize Beef Finisher are ideal concentrates to supplement cattle while at grass or for intensive finishing.

For more information, contact a member of our technical sales team



Rearing Heifers at Grass

by Joe Naughton (Calf Husbandry Specialist)

Prior to 1st winter, heifers should be weighed (ideally in August) to ensure they are on target. The target is 30% of mature body weight at 6 months of age.

Targets are as follows for calves at 6 months of age:

- Holstein 180kg
- Holstein x Friesian 155kg
- New Zealand/ Br. Friesian 148kg
- Jersey x Holstein Friesian 135kg

If heifers are below target, concentrate supplementation may be needed. 2kg of Nugget Super Grow Calf Nuts along with top quality grass will help achieve target weights. Graze aftergrass & reseed with young calves as both should have a low parasite burden.

A good worming programme should be followed during the calves 1st season. Ivermectin based products are very useful as they have persistent activity. In the case of lungworm, Ivermectins prevent reinfection for 28 days post treatment.

In order to combat resistance in gastrointestinal worm populations, it is important we use them properly. Ideally, save Ivermectin for 1st season calves if possible. Avoid underdosing as it's the main driver of resistance. The ideal interval between doses would be 35 days & give the calf 3 weeks exposure before first dose. If pasture burden is low & faecal egg counts are clear, dosing maybe unnecessary.

For more information, contact one of our retail branches.

Do you have Underperforming Paddocks?

By Hilda Dooley (Environmental/Crop Specialist)

Soil Compaction leads to a lack of oxygen and reduced biological activity, leading to poor root structure which negatively affects nutrient uptake. Compaction can be alleviated through physical (aeration or subsoiling) and biological means (increase biological life in the soil). In grassland management, compaction is likely to be due to animal traffic and contained to the top 4-6" of soil. In this situation, aeration is the most suitable option.

Top tips when planning Soil Aeration

- Carry out a soil assessment to determine whether you have compaction – aerating when not necessary could do more harm than good
- Assess the depth of compaction – to determine what type of aeration should be carried out
- Make sure soil conditions at the compacted level are right at the time of aerating – too wet and aeration will cause smear and damage the soil; too dry and there will be insufficient penetration of the tines

August & September can be a good time to aerate – grass productivity will have reduced slightly, so yield penalties from aeration are minimised, and soil conditions can still be good enough to aerate. Now is the time to start planning to Grow More Grass.

For further information phone Hilda on 05791 33584.



“What the farmers say”



Mairead & Pat McLoughlin - Dairy Farmers, Rath, Co.Offaly

“ After consultation with Grennans Soil Health Specialist in 2018, soil compaction was identified as a contributor on a number of underperforming paddocks. Following Grennans recommendations I used an aerator on some paddocks and I am really pleased with the results. I will definitely continue to use aeration to maintain optimum grass production as part of my overall soil health plan. ”

Introducing - J.Grennan & Sons GrassWatch Programme

By **Conor Condon** (Nutrition Specialist)

J.Grennan & Sons are delighted to announce our participation in the GrassWatch Programme, run in conjunction with Trouw Nutrition. The programme itself studies Grass Quality and how it can affect milk yield and composition.

Every Monday morning, a grass sample is taken from various farm locations around the country. Each sample is tested for Dry Matter, Energy, Protein, Fibre, Oil & Sugars. Milk Yield, Fat & Protein are also recorded as well as any other variables in the diet such as concentrates buffers and amount/type of fertiliser spread on the grass sample being tested. All results are then studied and a report is compiled showing minimums, maximums & averages of all samples collected. The report is very useful when making on farm nutrition recommendations as we know exactly the composition of the grass we are dealing with on farms in our area. Over the coming months you will start to see findings within the report shared on our various social media channels and our website.

The table below is taken from one GrassWatch report and shows recommended concentrate supplementation levels based on various grass intakes & milk yields.

To learn more about the GrassWatch Programme or to view the weekly report, drop an email to conor.condron@grennagri.com

	COMPOUND REQUIRED (KG/D)					
	8kg DMI	10kg DMI	12kg DMI	14kg DMI	15kg DMI	16kg DMI
20 litres	8.2	6.0	3.9	1.7	0.6	0.0
22 litres	9.1	7.0	4.9	2.7	1.6	0.6
24 litres	10.1	8.0	5.8	3.7	2.6	1.5
26 litres	11.1	9.0	6.8	4.7	3.6	2.5
28 litres	12.1	9.9	7.8	5.6	4.6	3.5
30 litres	13.1	10.9	8.8	6.6	5.6	4.5

Crop Update by Paul Mooney (Crop Specialist)

Fodder crops worked out very well last year. Many animals were moved straight to spring grass from fodder crops in 2019. Provided these crops are both grown & utilized properly, they have the potential to deliver big savings.

For those planning to sow Redstart or Rape, you need to get these crops sown ASAP in order to achieve a highest yield possible. It's now too late for Kale. Sowing Redstart after Winter Barley where you intend to sow a spring crop next year fits perfectly into a rotation. Broadcast Redstart at 3.5kg/acre & forage Rape at 4kg/acre.

Cover Crops:

For both GLAS & EFA (Ecological Focus Areas) purposes, many have to sow cover crops. You must sow 2 species of seed to fulfil your obligation and the crop must be sown by September 15th. Options available ex our stores listed below:

Soil Booster Max	1 pack sows 2.5acres	Contains Tillage Radish, Phacelia & Spring vetch
Soil Booster Plus	1 pack sows 5acres	Contains Tillage Radish, Phacelia and forage rape
Soil Booster Pro	1 pack sows 3.75acres	Contains Phacelia and Spring Vetch
Soil Booster Graze	1 pack sows 5acres.	Contains Stubble turnip & forage rape.

Roundup:

The use of Roundup is coming under increased pressure. Austria has now totally banned its use and there's a big possibility that round-up will be banned throughout the EU in the near future. In the meantime we need to act smart and get fields cleaned up! Grass weeds in tillage fields are one area that needs to be tackled urgently. Pre-harvest treatment of Scutch with 2lt/acre of Gallup is the best way to eradicate the weed. Its sometimes has to be done for 2 years due to its vast root system underground. Sterile brome post-harvest requires immediate stubble cultivation followed by Gallup when the plants germinate and leaf appears.