

Newsletter February 2020



Growth Targets for first 3 months of the Calf's Life

by Joe Naughton (Calf Specialist)

The aim of the LifeStart Programme is for calves to achieve high growth rates (700 – 1000 grams daily) in the first 12 weeks of the calf's life. Farmers should aim to double the calf's birth weight by 8 weeks of age. This boosts lifetime performance of the calf, resulting in a durable cow with higher milk yield, that will survive longer in the herd, leading to an overall higher lifetime production, returning more profit to the farmer.

The LifeStart Programme has also shown huge advantages in beef systems due to better calf health, higher live weight gain and extra fat deposition in bulls and steers at 17 -18 months - animals finish faster as a result. This is all achievable through the LifeStart feeding programme – which is intensive feeding of 900grams + for larger breeds of calves to achieve above average growth pre-weaning.

There are 5 critical control points that form the foundation of the LifeStart Programme

- Colostrum 3-4 litres of quality colostrum within first 6 hours.
- 150 grams/litre of **Wonder Thrive** (LifeStart approved milk replacer).
- Consistency: Regular feeding.
- Comfort: Dry, well bedded, well ventilated house.
- Hygiene: Cleanliness at birth and housing.

After 3-5 days introduce Nugget Super Grow Calf Nuts and good quality straw. Clean fresh water should always be available.

The LifeStart Programme boosts immunity therefore reducing

- Calf mortality rates to less than 5%.
- Incidence of diarrhoea to less than 10%.
- Respiratory problems to less than 10%.

	Wonder Thrive	Wonder Thrive + LungBooster Plus	Wonder Thrive Heifer Plus	Grennan's Easi-Rear
Whey based	✓	✓	–	✓
Skim based	–	–	✓ 50 % Skim	12 % Skim
LifeStart Approved	✓	✓	✓	–
Suitable for once-a-day feeding	✓	✓	✓	✓
LungBooster Plus	–	✓	✓	–
Crude Protein	23 %	23 %	22.5 %	23 %
Oils	17 %	17 %	25 %	17 %

Minimising NEB & optimising DMI in early lactation

by Seán Holian (Dairy Specialist)

In early lactation most cows go through a period of **Negative Energy Balance (NEB)** as **Dry Matter Intake (DMI)** are reduced greatly post-calving, while at the same time there is a rapid increase in energy requirement associated with milk production. This period of NEB increases the risk of metabolic disorders and can reduce fertility. Minimising this period of NEB is critical to a successful lactation and breeding season.

Careful attention should be paid to dry cow management to ensure adequate BCS (3.25 BCS at calving) is being achieved and enough dry cow minerals are offered. High quality, energy dense feeds should be fed to cows once they calve down. Offering Reviva immediately post-calving is the ideal way to

replenish energy, calcium and electrolyte balance, particularly to cows that have had a difficult calving. A high-quality dairy nut such as Mega Milk 16 should be fed with good quality grass silage. Where ground conditions allow, cows should be turned out to grass by day as spring grass is a high energy feed in comparison to grass silage.

This will also reduce the demand on conserved fodder. Excess protein in the diet should be avoided as it can result in excessive milking off the back and is costly. Once a day milking for the first few weeks can help to minimise NEB and will also reduce the labour burden at a busy time on farm, with minimal losses in milk production.



“What the farmers say”



“ We have been using Grennans bulk spreading service the last couple of years and find it very reliable and helpful in the busy months.

The fertiliser is spread evenly and accurately and I know that we are getting a top class service.

When you weigh it up, it's every bit as cheap as spreading it yourself. We will continue to use this service going forward. ”

Shaun Diver
Farm Manager, Tullamore Farms

Sulphur – the Cinderella Nutrient

by Hilda Dooley (Crop Specialist)

Unless you farm light sandy soils, Sulphur (S) tends to be ignored. For some people it is not considered to be worth the extra spend, and for others, it is the perceived dangers of inducing Copper deficiencies in livestock in high Molybdenum areas. However, when you look deeper, you will see the hard work done by S which is seldom recognised!

- Sulphur helps make other nutrients available (Ca, Mg, K and Na) and drags them into the soil solution where they become available to the plant.
- Sulphur increases Nitrogen Use Efficiency – S is an essential part of many protein enzymes that regulate photosynthesis and nitrogen.
- Sulphur applications to beans will improve the protein profile of the bean seed.
- Balancing nutrients leads to an improved soil fertility and health.

Soil analysis is not a good indicator of S status; a full leaf analysis (which includes each of the important nutrients) is better. However, in general, light sandy soils will retain less sulphur, so apply little and often. Conversely, higher organic matter soils will retain more S - but S should not be ignored on these soils.

Ask your J Grennan & Sons advisor if it is possible to add S to your usual blend, you won't regret it!

J Grennan & Sons Fertiliser Bulk Spreading

All our spreaders have the unique Bredal Headland Management System. This is a fully automated GPS field mapping system. It means you get MINIMAL OVER LAPPING and precise application rates right up to, but not in, the ditch.

• All 5 of our spreaders are equipped with the best tyres possible which limit the level of soil compaction done in fields. The pressure on the ground with the bulk spreaders is usually less than that of a farmer's own tractor!

• GPS Control – The satellite guidance system used by all our spreaders ensures extreme accuracy in terms of working widths, irrespective of field shape or how 'bare' your ground is!

• Split bins - All our spreaders have split bins holding 4-5t each, allowing the farmer to get 2 different products bulk spread on the farm if needed.

Contact your local branch or sales rep to organise your bulk spreading.



GRASSLAND FARMERS – Cloversafe herbicide products like Legumex DB, CloveX, Spruce, DB Plus and Underclear are going off the market in the near future. Talk to your Grennans Rep ASAP, but before the end of March 2020.

CryptoShield

by Shane Gonoude (Animal Health Specialist)



CRYPTOSHIELD improves gut health and promotes calf health, shine and thrive. It is a non-antibiotic complementary supplement for calves. It is a blend of plant extracts with high concentrations of natural polyphenols combined with organic acids, boosting calf performance while controlling scours.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- CryptoShield prevents cryptosporidium completing its life cycle, controlling scours.
- Greatly reduces the number of crypto eggs excreted by the calf, reducing infection load which reduces the spread of the crypto disease.
- Boosts immunity in young and vulnerable calves.
- Strengthens and protects the villous lining of the calf's gut.
- Reduces the permeability of the gut to infection.
- Increases Anti-inflammatory properties in the gut to reduce fluid loss and pain.
- Packed full of antioxidant effects to strengthen calf defences.