

Newsletter AUGUST 2020



Economics of Feed Supplementation on Milk Fats

By Conor Condron - (Ruminant Specialist) Ph: 086 1453416

With the breeding season finishing up, many farmers are considering concentrate feeding options for the remainder of the grazing season. Farmers must remember that quality always pays!

The economics of meal feeding will depend on your:

1. Stocking rate
2. Cow type
3. Concentrate quality
4. Milk price

See figures below outlining the possible economics of feed supplementation for the specific purpose of increasing milk fat. Some processors are currently paying approximately €3.13/kg Butterfat.

Milk Value Difference if You Can Increase Fat by 0.4%.		
	Fat Maximising Concentrates	Standard Concentrates
Milk Yield (Litres)	25	25
Milk Butter Fat %	4.1%	3.7%
Butter Fat Yield	1.02kg	0.92kg
Price paid per kg of Butterfat (€)	€3.13	€3.13
Milk Fat value head/day (€)	€3.19	€2.88
Milk Value Difference = €3.19 - €2.88 = 31c/head/day		

Feed Cost Difference		
	Fat Maximising Concentrates	Standard Concentrates
Feeding Rate (kg/head/day)	5	5
Price per tonne (€)	€300	€260
Feed Cost head/day (€)	€1.50	€1.30
Feed Cost Difference = €1.50 - €1.30 = 20c/head/day		

Milk Value - Feed Cost = 31c - 20c = 11c/head/day		
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Conclusion:

1. Based on the above results, the farmer is better off on the Fat Maximising Concentrate by 11c/Head/day or at least €300 per month across a herd of 100 cows.
2. There will be other less obvious benefits including better cow health & improved fertility.
3. Spend a little, Gain a lot!

Harvest Update

By Paul Mooney - (Crop Specialist)
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Winter barley yields have been disappointing, but not unexpected. On average, yields are 1t/acre behind normal and locally the average yield appears to be around 2.75t/acre. Crops looked a lot better prior to harvest but you must factor in all the damage from high rainfall last winter along with very poor sowing conditions which destroyed many patches throughout fields. Quality has been good. Screenings were high at the start of harvest but quickly improved to almost 0 screenings in some loads.

Throughout the Winter, many thought they had made a mistake by sowing Winter crops

and wondered should they have been left until the Spring. This all changed when the drought arrived, and it became apparent that Spring crops were going to be the bigger problem. It highlights that a mix of crops is always best as it doesn't leave you totally exposed when the weather is difficult.



Benefits of Growing a Catch Crop in the Tillage System

Hilda Dooley - (Crop Specialist)
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Catch crops have numerous benefits - none more important than their potential to improve soil health and increase organic matter. In a year like 2020, healthier soils held crops better during the drought and are showing to have the best yields by far.

A popular all-round option would be a mix of forage brassicas, such as **Soil Booster Graze**, which can be fed over winter and, if managed correctly, can provide soil health benefits too.

Where your No. 1 concern is improving soil health, include the following species;

Vetch and Phacelia will help to scavenge and recycle nitrogen, at a time of year when nitrogen is likely to be leached. Choose **Soil Booster Pro**. This mix also contains Mustard as such is quick growing and works great as a green manure. This is specially useful when you have a short time frame and want to increase organic matter.

Tillage radish and vetch are excellent for soil structure improvements (breaking compaction and improving soil structure) which will lead to an improved water cycle, improved conditions for soil microbiota, increased organic matter, and better nutrient cycling. Choose **Soil Booster Plus**.

General rules to increase soil health

- Select the cover crop based on your needs - will you use a mix of species or a single species?
- Sow as early as possible to get as much growth as possible - sowing in early August is much better than September.
- Consider and carry out crop destruction in good time. If grazing, use light stock, ensure soil conditions are suitable (not too wet), have a good-sized layback area.

NUGGET 4 WAY COPPER BUCKETS

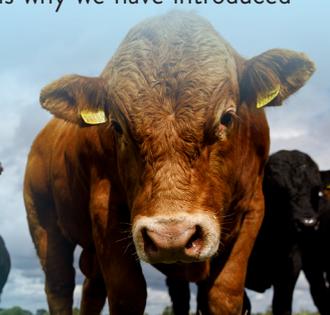
20Kg Molassed Mineral & Vitamin Block

For all Calves, Weanlings, Beef Cattle and Cows, but particularly suitable for livestock grazing on High Molybdenum / High pH / Low Copper / Peaty Soils.

This bucket is unique, because it delivers high levels of four different forms of Copper. In addition 40% of the total Copper in this bucket is Protected Copper. This means it will not be mopped up in high Molybdenum situations and will remain available to the animal.

Total Copper content is set at the maximum level allowable i.e. 3500 mg/kg.

There are very few, if any, other mineral buckets currently available on the Irish market, with such high Copper levels. For our own stock we were unable to source any mineral bucket that delivered the quantities and quality of Copper we required - that is why we have introduced this one.



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Apply Ps & Ks Now to Build for Next Year

By Paddy Casey

(Fertiliser & Soil Health Specialist) Ph: 087 2576286

Nitrogen use efficiency is the new terminology which will become more familiar to all of us in the next few years. In order to achieve maximum performance from applied nitrogen, it is critical that our background soil fertility is correct.

A balanced soil with P and K at index 3 and PH of 6.5 will give the best response to nitrogen. This is particularly important on silage ground and in the paddocks where baled silage have been harvested.

The next couple of applications are ideal to replenish P and K and allow levels to build up in the soil for next season, with no danger of luxury uptake. Apply a compound such as 18-6-12 /10-10-20 /13-6-20 /15-3-20 among others, and specific blends can be made to suit your soil analysis.

Contact any member of our technical team for more information.

Lameness in the Irish Dairy Herd

Aideen Fleury - (Animal Health Specialist) Ph: 057 9133585

Lameness is the 2nd most common condition on Irish dairy farms after mastitis. It is not only a problem for the cow, it also leads to significant financial losses for the farm business with one case estimated to cost €160 - €300.

Causes:

Claw Injuries - *Sole Ulcers, Bruises, White Line Disease.*

Nutritional - *Laminitis.*

Bacterial - *Foot Rot, Digital Dermatitis.*

The most prevalent and toughest to treat in Irish dairy herds is Digital Dermatitis - known commonly as *Mortellaro*.

Mortellaro is highly contagious. It initially looks like a red rash and can develop into a strawberry like lesion with scabbing around the cleft between the claws and on the bulb of the heel.

This infection can cause severe pain, restrict mobility and reduce feed intake. This results in reduced milk yield, fertility & profit margins.

Monitoring: Clinical cases should be recorded and given prompt treatment. Repeat offenders should be culled.

Treatment & Prevention:

- Regular hoof trimming by a professional.
- A programme of routine foot bathing with a strong disinfectant should follow up for infected animals. Use 2-5% Kanfers Hoofmix, 5% Copper Sulphate or 10% Formalin, available in all J.Grennan & Sons branches.
- It is important that the feet are cleaned before walking through the bath. The more regularly you foot bathe the more successful the outcome.
- Keep the area dry and clean, bandage with a vet-wrap in severe cases, or apply a shoe on the opposite claw to help keep it clean and provide relief for the cow. This must be combined with good management practices such as clean yards and cubicles clean, hoof paring etc.

A sustained treatment and prevention programme will ultimately reduce infection rates in the herd.



The Benefits of Feeding Concentrate to Weaned Lambs

By Damien Conboy - (Sheep Specialist) Ph: 087 2124036

Factory lamb prices have held up well throughout this season and, unlike this time last year, it opens the conversation around feeding concentrate to weaned lambs. A marginal investment of €10 of meal per head is certainly worth weighing up before deciding not to feed any meal and hoping to draft all lambs from grass alone. Farms running at a high stocking rate of 13/14 ewes/Ha should certainly consider this option as there will be a big demand for grass for flushing ewes ahead of the coming breeding season. Remember that building grass supply for next spring starts in October. Keeping excessive numbers of lambs grazing grass late in the Autumn, could cost more money further down the road.

Benefits of feeding concentrates:

1. Increased live weight gain
2. Increased kill-out percentage
3. Reduce the number of days lambs are on the farm = more grass for the breeding flock.

4. Reduce the number of drafts to the factory
5. Maximise price as the vast majority of lambs will kill up to the weight.

Why use Nugget Sheep Feeds as your product of choice:

- Our belief and approach to formulating sheep feeds is simple - Quality is first and foremost, every time.
- Ingredient costs must take somewhat of a back seat when formulating sheep diets. This is particularly the case when it comes to feeding pregnant ewes or young lambs. We use quality ingredients such as Maize, Barley, Beet pulp and Soya bean meal.
- Our diets are designed to maximise energy intakes and lamb development while preventing any digestive upsets.
- Nugget Lamb finishing diets contain high inclusions of cereals and proteins to maximise live weight gain and kill-out percentage.
- We have a range of cubes and coarse feeds to suit every farmer's needs.