

# Newsletter MAY 2021



## Protect Your Lambs From Nematodirus Infection

By Damien Conboy – (B.Agr.Sc) – Ph: 087 2124036

**April and May** tend to be the greatest **risk period** for Nematodirus infection in young lambs. Nematodirus is caused by the worm *Nematodirus battus*, and under certain climatic conditions, this worm can strike very quickly, with little or no warning. Before they can hatch, the eggs must undergo a period of cold weather followed by warmer temperatures of 10° C or more. So, springtime is obviously the period of highest risk.

*Nematodirus battus* has a different life cycle to other sheep worms, in that the development to the infective larva takes place within the egg, enabling extremely rapid build-up of worm populations when conditions are right. Because of this, we can't afford to have a 'wait and see' policy. Farmers must act on the basis of predicted risk assessment, and locally based advice.

### Treatment:

- If you feel your lambs are at risk and/or notice obvious clinical signs, such as sudden scouring, you need to treat for Nematodirus IMMEDIATELY. We advise farmers to use a **white (1-BZ)** drench which are normally highly effective and suitable for young lambs.

- In addition, carry out a faecal egg count (FEC) 7-10 days after the lambs were treated, to check that the treatment has been fully effective. This will also identify if anthelmintic resistance is a problem on your farm. J Grennan & Sons can help you organise this test.
- A FEC will also identify if the coccidian challenge is high, and a decision on dosing for cocci can also be made.
- Currently there are no drenches with effective residual activity against Nematodirus. This means that as the lamb continues to graze, it can become re-infected with larvae again. However, lambs tend to develop resistance to Nematodirus from about twelve weeks of age.



## ANNOUNCEMENT - NEW FEED TECHNOLOGY

We are delighted to announce that we are including a new feed additive in several of our top dairy, calf and lamb diets, including Elite Breeder 14% Dairy Nuts, Turbo Calf Nuts and Elite Lamb Pellets. This additive uses new technology which has been developed in Ireland. The

results we have seen to date indicate dramatic results on farm. It is shown to be particularly effective at preventing acidosis, improve intakes and driving performance in milk yield and liveweight gain. Talk to your J Grennan & Sons Rep for further information.

RATH  
057 91 33002

KILCORMAC  
057 91 35004

TINNYCROSS  
057 93 25500

MOATE  
090 64 66526

ROSEMOUNT  
090 64 36358

MOYVORE  
044 93 55593

# Minimising Milk Fat Depression This Summer

By Aisling Claffey - (B.Agr.Sc., Ph.D.) – Ph: 086 0317483

April was a month where low growth rates and dry conditions resulted in the onset of milk fat depression for many herds. There are several factors that contribute to low milk fats including grazing management and nutrition. These impact on rumen conditions, and together with genetic influences, give rise to milk fat depression.

Our Grass Watch program has shown that week after week, fibre levels (NDF) in the grass have been very low. Coupled with high levels of sugars in the grass, this has resulted in a very rapidly digestible feed in the rumen, resulting in lower rumen pH/acidosis! So, to minimise milk fat depression, we suggest you pay close attention to the following:

## Grazing management:

- Avoid low-pre grazing covers (1200-1400 kg DM/ha) – higher levels of fat depressing oils are present in grass at lower covers. Aim for grass to reach 3-leaf growth stage before grazing (1400-1600 kg DM/ha).
- Cut and weigh pre-grazing covers to identify if your covers are where you want them to be – lighter covers, will have less stem and lower DM compared to first rotation grass.
- Follow the cows with fertiliser - don't delay, because late nitrogen levels contribute to increased oil levels in the grass.
- Push cows to graze out paddocks, this stem provides physically effective fibre (peNDF).

## Nutrition:

- Buffer feeds are a source of physically effective fibre but are routinely pulled from the diet at this time – a cow requires 17% of diet to be peNDF and lush grass may not provide this.

- Offer high levels of concentrate feed as cows approach peak milk production and breeding season.
- High protein nuts tend to contain a lot of starch-based ingredients to compliment indoor diets – these ingredients are rapidly digestible and will reduce rumen pH.
- Wetter grass causes a dilution of saliva, reducing buffering capacity in the rumen.

**Genetics:** Many of the herds predisposed to milk fat depression also have low PTA (predicted transmission ability) for Milk Fat kg and %. You should consistently pick a team of bulls with high PTA % for milk fat and protein to see long term gains in your herds constituents!

Some of these suggestions may not be practical on your farm, such as buffer feeding or achieving sufficient straw intake to increase peNDF and improve rumen pH. To allow for this, we normally adapt our dairy nut formulations in late spring - we focus on including highly digestible sources of fibre as our main source of energy. This year we would like to introduce our **Fat Care Dairy 14** which delivers the full rate of Cargill's **Equaliser Cream** in a 4kg feed rate. International and local trials have shown at least a 0.3% increase in milk fat % where this additive is used. Costing 16c/head/day, a 0.3% increase in milk fat is worth 30c\*/cow @ an average of 25 litres. This gives a return on investment of at least 14c/cow/day! If milk fat is something you have had trouble with in the past, please contact us so we can help you address the challenges facing your cow at such a critical time!

*\*Based on approximate value/kg milk fat on February milk price*



# Crop Update

By Paul Mooney – (B.Agr.Sc) – Ph: 086 3532342



Winter beans vs Spring beans at end of April

**Cereal Crops update:** Disease pressure is currently low, and crops are quite stressed due to large swings between day and night-time temperatures so beware of spraying in harsh conditions. Most crops have nitrogen to take up when moisture and heat arrive so while stems are stiff at present, this could change, and soft growth could leave crops weak. Winter barley can often be only at half its height when flag leaf appears.

**Winter Barley:** Most crops received their 1st fungicide mid-April so will possibly only need two fungicides in total with the final one in mid-May when awns emerge. For crops that received their 1st fungicide in early April, they may need a cover spray to carry the crops through to mid-May.

**Winter Wheat:** Most crops are at T1 stage. Best chemistry to apply is Lentyma which contains the leading new triazole Revysol. Don't forget to include a multisite fungicide, such as Stavento, as a partner.

**Winter Oats:** Oats have remained very clean. Make sure they receive enough growth regulator – stems might be strong at present, but this may change.

**Spring Barley:** Crops have emerged nicely and are now at topdressing stage. In long term cereal sites, you can apply up to 125units of nitrogen/acre in total. Reduce by 10units with Planet. This rate will change where there was break crops in the rotation and/or organic manures applied. When temperatures improve herbicides will need to be applied. Low temperatures after a very wet winter would lead you to believe that aphids shouldn't be an issue. Assess each field for risk and don't use if not needed - insecticides will kill many other beneficial insects, including natural aphid predators, and over use will lead to resistant aphid populations.

## Improve Spray Efficacy by Addressing Water Hardness and pH

By Hilda Dooley - (B.Sc. M.Sc. Ph.D.) Ph: 086 6074729

Water quality in a spray tank can affect the solubility and adsorption of the pesticides, meaning the pesticide will not do the job it is meant to. Water quality is affected by things like debris, suspended solids, water hardness, and pH.

Water hardness is determined by the amount of iron, calcium, and magnesium dissolved in your water. Like magnets, these positively charged ions lock themselves to the negatively charged pesticide molecules. This creates a larger molecule which will struggle to get into the pest/weed, significantly reducing the likelihood of the pesticide reaching its target. If you have hard water in your yard, using rainwater for your spray application will go a long way to improve the spray efficacy. When you do not have access to rainwater, a water conditioner will help get the best from your sprays.

As a general rule, most herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides perform best in a slightly acidic water, pH

4-6.5. If water in a spray tank is at a less than ideal pH, the pesticide can degrade quicker than expected.

**Spray Plus** is an acidifying nitrogen solution which acts as a water conditioner. It reduces and buffers the water pH, and it neutralises bicarbonates to soften your water, improving the overall efficacy of your spray solutions.

**Spray Plus** is used at a rate specific to the hardness of your water, so ask your J Grennan & Sons rep to test your water.



# Fertiliser Plans for Silage Ground

By Brian Delaney – (B.Agr.Sc) – Ph: 086 0449529

When planning to make silage for next winter, keep in mind that the higher the quality of the silage, the cheaper the diet will be. This will apply to all diets for stock on beef farms apart from spring calving suckler cows. Waiting an extra 2 weeks for the sward to bulk up is a false economy – there may be a lower cost per tonne, but every 5 points lost in DMD will take an extra kilo in concentrates to reach the same level of performance.

The big advantage of baled silage is the flexibility it offers in terms of being able to harvest lighter cuts. On very heavily stocked beef farms, taking a high-quality cut might be more of a luxury as bulk is the main requirement, but even on these farms it would be a very worthwhile exercise to calculate what silage is needed for very high performing stock and target high quality bales to these animals.

Analysis of silage diet for 300kg Weanling			
Harvest Date	Silage cost per tonne @ 25% dry matter	Diet to achieve target weight gain	Feed Cost per KG liveweight gain*
End May = 70 DMD	€32	Ad-lib silage + 1kg concentrates	€1.52
Min June = 65 DMD	€27	Ad-lib silage + 2kg concentrates	€1.69



*\*The heavier the stock being fed, the greater the feed cost differences - because heavier cattle demand feed supplementation rates.*



**POWERSTART** silage additive will drive performance as it massively improves preservation and palatability, leading to less wastage and much higher intakes. **POWERSTART** is the only additive to contain Aber F1 bacteria which can access both the simple and complex (stored) sugars in grass.

**POWERSTART** works by:

- Having the correct bacteria to produce more “sweet” lactic acid and less of the “sour” acetic and butyric acids.

- Ensuring rapid fermentation, locking in more nutrients and maximising quality.
- Trials have shown 27% increase in weight gain of beef cattle fed with Powerstart silage.
- Convenient to use... just add water and go! **POWERSTART** is available in 100 tonne packs. Each pack contains 4 sachets. Each sachet will treat 25 tonnes of silage.

*For more information contact your local J Grennan & Sons branch or representative.*



Congratulations to Shane Gonoude who is a valued member of our technical sales team. Shane recently graduated with a master’s degree in Agricultural Extension and Innovation from UCD. The two-year part time masters equips graduates with the skills and knowledge to become more effective at supporting farmers in developing their farm business, changing behaviour and incorporating innovation at farm level. The agri food industry is developing and competing more every day. We believe at J Grennan & Sons that having support teams of highly skilled people, both technically and personally, is vital to progress innovation and change on farm.