



## THE IMPORTANCE OF PRE-CALVER MINERALS IN THE DIET!

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

With the majority of herds now beginning to switch their focus to drying off, attention must be paid to individual BCS to ensure thin cows are given adequate time to gain body condition. Silage feeding values seem to be considerably lower this year, with the majority of results to date ranging between 64-68 DMD. This has very important implications for dry cow diets that should not be ignored. See the table below and speak with any member of our technical team as regards a more detailed feeding plan for your dry cows.

Silage DMD	BCS < 2.5 12-14 weeks dry	BCS 2.5-3.0 8-10 weeks dry	BCS > 3.0 8 weeks dry
72	Silage + 1kg	Silage Ad-lib	Silage restricted
68	Silage + 2kg	Silage + 1kg	Silage Ad-lib
64	Silage + 3kg	Silage + 2kg	Silage Ad-lib
60	Silage + 4kg	Silage + 3kg	Silage + 1kg

Correct mineral balance in the dry cow diet is also critical. Some of the more important aspects include:

**Magnesium (Mg)** - all of the pathways involved in mobilising Calcium (Ca) are Mg-dependent. Its absorption can be impaired by high Potassium (K) diets. High K/DCAB silages can also affect the efficacy of the Parathyroid hormone to stimulate the mobilisation of Ca. With high-risk forages, Magnesium Chloride will acidify the diet in addition to adding more Mg, so will help further offset the detrimental effects of high DCAB. This is crucial to prevent sub-clinical and clinical hypocalcaemia, which can trigger other metabolic disorders and infections!

**Copper (Cu)** - plays an important role in energy metabolism and immune cell function. Soil contamination and high levels of Iron, Aluminium and/or Molybdenum can impair Cu absorption in the diet of the dry cow. Our pre-calver minerals contain 50% Bioplex® Copper to ensure improved absorption in the presence of these antagonistic elements.

**Selenium (Se)** - plays an important role in animal health, particularly around calving where there is an increased risk of uterine and udder health issues. 40% of the Se in our pre-calver minerals is in the highly available form known as Sel-Plex®.

**Vitamin content** also plays a critical role in the transition period with Vit E being an important antioxidant and critical to the immune system. Vit D3 plays an important role, in conjunction with Mg in the mobilisation of Ca from the bone and increases Ca absorption from the gut.

**Aromabiotic** is a key component of our **Immuno range** of pre-calving supplements. It helps support the cow's immune system during the transition period by strengthening White Blood Cell activity, ensuring they are more responsive in tackling sources of infection. On farms, this has resulted in improved uterine and udder health, less energy diverted away from milk production and BCS, and healthy calves anecdotally as well.



## Immuno Range Testimonial

*'We've used the Immuno Pre-calver mineral for the past two seasons and continued to feed it throughout early lactation this year with the Immuno Mega Milk 16. We've found our cows and calves are much healthier, and fertility in particular was much improved this spring.'*

*Seamus & James Claffey, Dairy Farmers, Moate, Co. Westmeath*

# FLUKE DOSING SHEEP

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

With the wet weather of recent weeks, sheep farmers must not become complacent when it comes to protecting their flock from liver fluke (*Fasciola Hepatica*).

**ACUTE FLUKE** occurs as a result of large numbers of immature fluke burrowing through the sheep's liver, which can lead to sudden death.

**CHRONIC FLUKE** arises due to long-term exposure to infective larvae. Fluke develops in the liver and bile ducts, causing damage to the liver. Clinical signs of acute liver fluke include:

- Anaemia – paleness around eyes and gums may indicate anaemia caused by fluke infestations
- loss of condition

When sending lambs or cull ewes to the factory, it is advised to **get liver examinations** for signs of liver fluke. All unexplained deaths should be referred to the nearest veterinary laboratory by your vet for post-mortem.

Treatment of the problem is flock specific. Flukicides are divided into 6 groups according to their active ingredient, as outlined in Table 2. Triclabendazole is the only group that has activity against early immature fluke.

However, there have been cases of resistance to these products. Closantel, Nitroxylin, and Rafoxanide are only active against semi-mature (fluke over 6 weeks old) and mature fluke. Products containing Oxytoclozanide and Albendazole are only active against adult fluke.

The choice of product should be based on the stage of development of the fluke. If diagnosis indicates a large presence of immature fluke you need to treat it with a product effective against immature stages.

The best option here is the use of a Triclabendazole product (Tribex or EndoFluke). If the problem is thought to be mature fluke, sheep may benefit from a dose effective against adult fluke (Ranide or Rida Fluke).

Flukicide (Active Ingredient)	Liver-fluke stage of development in weeks													
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Albendazole									50-70%		80-99%			
Oxytoclozanide									50-70%		80-99%			
Nitroxylin							50-90%			90-99%				
Rafoxanide							50-90%			90-99%				
Closantel			23-73%				91*95%			97-100%				
Triclabendazole	90-99%		99-99.9%											

For the best advice, consult your vet to draw up a treatment programme appropriate to your farm/flock. Controlling fluke in your breeding sheep over the coming months is crucial, as ewes served in September are approaching mid-pregnancy and the incidence of fluke can have detrimental impacts on body condition and overall health in the lead-up to lambing.



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# WINTER HOUSING PARASITE PROTOCOLS FOR BEEF AND DRY STOCK FARMS

By Shane Gonoude - (B. Agr. Sc., M. Sc.) - Ph: 087 6466707

Winter housing marks an abrupt transition from pasture-based husbandry to the management of cattle indoors. Housing provides a good monitoring opportunity to assess the parasite status of your livestock. Before considering the parasites themselves, it is valuable to consider the performance of the stock over the previous grazing season and how it compared with your expectations and targets. If parasites are suspected of having detrimental effects on performance, we recommend a programme of diagnostic sampling/faecal analysis.

The results from this type of monitoring will be an aid in planning a parasite control programme for the next grazing season as well as deciding on optimum treatment for parasites at housing. In these times of high input prices, it goes without saying that it is critically important to optimise weight gain and thrive.

We are now at the time of year, when traditionally we see heavier burdens of lungworm, especially in cattle that have not received anthelmintic treatment over the summer months. Allowing these cattle to continue without treatment could lead to further lung damage which could lead to pneumonia and depressed weight gains over the housing period. This is particularly important for younger cattle.

Cattle cannot pick up worms and liver fluke from conserved forages. They can only do so from grazed grass. This means that effective anthelmintic treatments at or during housing should keep the animal practically free of worms and liver fluke until they return to pasture the following Spring.

The cattle parasites that need to be targeted at housing are Stomach worms (*Ostertagia*), Lungworms (*Dictyocaulus viviparus*), Liver fluke (*Fasciola hepatica*), Chewing lice and Sucking lice. Regarding Stomach worm control it is important to select a wormer that has activity against the inhibited larval stages (Type II *Ostertagiosis*) as well as adult worms. The inhibited larvae of *Ostertagia* should be specifically targeted at housing in order to eliminate the risk of potentially serious disease occurring towards the end of the housing period. Always use an anthelmintic effective against inhibited larvae for this. Some benzimidazoles (white drenches) and all products containing macrocyclic lactones (clear drenches e.g., ivermectin, doramectin, moxidectin) are active against these inhibited stages. Levamisole (yellow drenches) are not effective against Type II *Ostertagia*.

Winter is also the most common time to see infestations in cattle with external parasites such as lice and mange. It is important to treat all cattle in the shed when treating for external parasites.



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Contact any member of our Technical Team for more information.

# WINTER FEED PLAN FOR DRY COWS, FAT V THIN COWS

By Brian Delaney – (B. Agr. Sc.) – 086 0449592

On most farms, suckler cows are now being weaned and are entering sheds for the winter. Now is the best time to adjust their body condition, so this is the time to look at the management of their diet.

**THIN COWS:** it is important to feed concentrates shortly after weaning rather than waiting until later in the pregnancy. As cows get nearer calving, their energy and protein requirements increase to support calf growth and they also eat less as the calf grows and puts pressure on ruminal space.

**FAT COWS:** because suckler cows tend to have a long dry period, there is a tendency for cows to gain condition, especially after weaning. This is the critical time to restrict silage intake and add straw to the diet in order to limit energy intake. Once the cow approaches 4 weeks pre-calving, straw should be removed and the cow offered ad-lib silage to meet the growing requirements of the calf.

*Note that 125g pre-calver mineral should be fed daily from 8 weeks pre-calving in all circumstances.*

Silage Quality	“Far Out” dry period			6 weeks pre-calving		
	Thin	Fit	Fat	Thin	Fit	Fat
64 DMD	Silage + 2 Kg conc	Ad-lib silage	Restricted silage + straw	Silage + 1 kg conc	Ad-lib silage	Ad-lib silage
69 DMD	Silage + 1 kg conc	Restricted silage + straw	Restricted silage + straw	Ad-lib silage	Ad-lib silage	Ad-lib silage
74 DMD	Ad-lib silage	Restricted silage + straw	Restricted silage + straw	Ad-lib silage	Ad-lib silage	Restricted silage + straw

\*Restricted silage = 30kg dry/35kg wet silage + 2 kg straw

Cows should be monitored for body condition throughout the dry period and managed accordingly, particularly cows on ad-lib silage because DM and daily intakes can vary widely. Silage analysis is recommended to ensure a more accurate recommendation.

## BEST PRACTICE FOR CONTROL OF BYDV

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

Barley Yellow Dwarf Virus (BYDV) poses a serious threat to cereal crops in Ireland. BYDV is spread by grain aphids, with barley being the most susceptible to infection. Where crops are badly affected by BYDV, yield reductions of up to 75% can be incurred.

It was largely responsible for the reduced winter barley yields in 2022. As a result, most farmers will have been advised to go for later sowing dates of winter crops to avoid infection by BYDV. While crops were sown up to 10 days later than usual this autumn, temperatures at the end of October were unseasonably high, so we still need to be careful.

Many crops of barley have now emerged and are at their most vulnerable stage. Peak infection times are late October and early November, so insecticide application now is essential. Crops which were sown in early-mid October will require 2 applications of insecticide. A Pyrethroid, such as Stealth, should be applied at the 2-leaf stage. Crops should receive another treatment using Transform 2-3 weeks later. Provided temperatures return to more seasonal values from mid-November, the risk to crops from then on should be minimal, because while aphids can tolerate very low temperatures, wet and cold weather combined usually decimates their activity.



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