

Newsletter APRIL

2024

JGRENNAN
& SONS



GRASS RESEEDS 2024:

Weather permitting, there will be a lot of reseeding this year as pastures have been badly damaged from poaching and flooding. Reseeding is a 7 to 10 year investment with the cost of the job easily recovered in 2 years provided it's done correctly and you chose the right varieties & mix.

Each year, we put a lot of effort in the choosing the best available mix for your farm. These mixes will always contain the newest and best performing varieties that are fully tried, tested and proven by the Dept of Agriculture under Irish conditions.



NEW FOR 2024:

Galgorm: The top variety available and will be most highly sought after variety of the year. Top PPI figure of 266. Superb growth across all the seasons (Spring 60, Summer 66 & Autumn 67). A must have this year for a leading grazing mix.

Tollymore: Another new addition to the 2024 PPI list. 5th highest ranking on PPI list. Very good characteristics and because it comes from Goldcrop, its set to be a 5star for grazing utilization.

Aberspey: 2nd highest performing variety available. High performance across all the classes and best quality of all varieties available in 2024.

Mixtures available: (All come with 0.6kg of Naked White Clover)

Grennan's Sweetgraze: The ultimate in a grazing mix. Delivers high yield and high utilization keeping your grazing platform ahead of the rest. Contains Galgorm, Barwave, Abergain & Ballintoy

Grennan's Hi Digestibility: A grazing mix totally based on the highest possible utilization, giving you the ultimate in graze outs through compromising a small amount of yield. Contains Astonconqueror, Astonenergy, Glenfield & Tollymore.

Grennan's Cut n Graze: Delivers you a high yield of quality 1st cut silage at the end of May followed by grazing. Contains Abergain, Barwave, Aberspey & Abermagic.

IMPLICATIONS OF GRAZING SILAGE GROUND LATE

By Brian Delaney - (B.Agr.Sc.) – Ph: 086 044 9592

Silage decisions this year will be more of a balancing act than a lot of years, considering how low carryover silage stocks will be by the time ground dries sufficiently to let stock out permanently. Deciding on whether to graze silage ground when cattle go out, or to close up now will depend on several factors.

If quantity is the target for this year's first cut, silage ground should not be grazed, as trials have shown that grazing silage swards up to mid-April can reduce yields by 25%. If you have a lot of stock where excellent quality is not needed

such as dry suckler cows, this is the best approach.

If quality is the target for stock such as weanlings, stores & finishing stock, grazing to clean out residuals will improve digestibility by on average 5% DMD. Harvesting can be delayed by a week to help increase bulk without losing this quality advantage. The difference between feeding 75 DMD silage to a weanling for 150 days versus 70 DMD silage is 25kg liveweight. Chasing bulk to the detriment of quality can be a false economy as stock will have

to be kept longer on the farm to achieve the same target weights.

Grazing silage ground on your farm might not be an option due to turnout date running too late/ground conditions being poor/covers on grazing platform etc. but if quality is still the target, harvest date will be particularly important. Where covers are good going into the spring, target harvest date should be mid-May to ensure good quality. If covers are low, harvest can be pushed out to the end of May.



MANAGEMENT OF THE EWE AND LAMB POST LAMBING

By Aaron Kealy - (B.Agr.Sc.) – Ph: 086 199 9148

A wet and windy March resulted in a difficult lambing season for most and the management of ewes with lambs at foot over the next 4-6 weeks will have a huge bearing on a flock's productivity for the coming year.

Ewes suckling lambs that are remaining indoors for more than a week after birth will need concentrate levels increased as their feed requirements increase quickly after lambing. Ewes rearing twins in good body condition on quality (70DMD) silage will require 1.2kg of a 18-20% crude protein concentrate. This should be fed for up to four weeks until peak lactation is reached and concentrate quantity can be reduced gradually.

When ewes and lambs are to be turned out to grass, adequate time to bond should be provided prior to turnout, lambs should be full of milk and healthy. This will ensure lambs are lively and will avoid mismothering.

The feeding of ewes outdoors is fully dependent on the amount of grass and quality that is available to the flock. Ewes in good body condition at lambing have the ability to lose a small amount of condition without affecting their milking ability. However, it is crucial that ewes are fed to their

requirement for up to 4 weeks after lambing as they are in their peak milk production in this period. For many, current ground and weather conditions will warrant concentrate feeding at grass for ewes regardless of litter size and creep feeding of lambs should be considered where ewe condition and milk yield is a concern, maximising liveweight gain in the young lamb is of paramount importance.

EWES & LAMB COBS:

- o 15mm diameter
- o Minimal waste
- o Suitable for both pregnant & lactating ewes



IS COCCIDIOSIS HOLDING BACK YOUR CALVES THIS SPRING.

By *Shane Gonoude*

(B.Agr.Sc., M.Agr. Sc) – Ph: 087 646 6707



Coccidiosis is primarily a disease of calves & lambs but can also affect older animals. The coccidia life cycle takes about three weeks, from ingestion of the infectious stages (oocysts) to the excretion of millions of new oocysts.

The length of the life cycle means that scour caused by coccidia generally occurs in calves that are more than three weeks of age.

Scour develops during the later stages of the life cycle, which means that by the time scour is seen, severe damage has already been done to inner lining of the intestines. Coccidia can cause a severe & often, bloody diarrhoea which can be accompanied by straining and rectal prolapse. Specific treatment at this stage is usually uneconomical, but supportive treatment should be undertaken. This entails isolating the calf, putting it under an infra-red lamp and giving it electrolytes and milk.

Products containing the active ingredient Toltrazuril such as Cox-Kure (available in all Grennan branches) are licensed for the prevention of clinical signs of coccidiosis and the reduction of coccidia shedding in calves. Toltrazuril acts on all stages of coccidia and even reduces oocyst production even if administered after the appearance of the first oocysts in the faeces.

Even if calves show no signs of scour, the infection can have a serious impact on growth rates. Low level, prolonged, chronic Coccidiosis is now a serious, but often undiagnosed problem in calves (+ lambs) on many Irish farms. If you think your farm may have this problem, talk to us about diagnosis & possible solutions.

MOLYBDENUM TOXICITY IN CALVES

By *Joe Naughton (B.AgSc.MSc)* – Ph: 086 145 2586

At farm level we hear a lot about Copper deficiency, however this is often more of a Molybdenum toxicity issue, especially in calves. Excess Molybdenum (Mo) in grass acts as an antagonist which stops Copper absorption in the animal. It's very important to bear this in mind especially this spring because molybdenum levels will be extremely high in pastures after this unusually wet/cold spring.

Mo toxicity often causes a bad diarrhea within 10 days of turnout. During the 1st month at grass, calves lose a lot of body condition and a red tinge occurs on their coats. This can develop into chronic ill thrift for the entire first grazing season which is often the most expensive aspect of the problem. Weaned dairy calves seem to be the most susceptible to Molybdenum toxicity, as they will be better grazers than suckler calves. Also, where high levels of nitrogen and good grassland management are practiced ill thrift is most severe.

The best form of control is to identify high risk paddocks by carrying out grass mineral analysis in mid-April and avoid having calves graze these paddocks. Best to use these high Molybdenum paddocks for silage as the silage ensiling process reduces Molybdenum availability. Also, the use of soil aeration and improving soil health can help reduce the level of Molybdenum in soil and therefore reduce the risk in pasture. Don't spread fertilizer containing Sulphur in high Molybdenum pastures as this further hinders Copper absorption.

The use of Grennan's **4 way Copper buckets** can help the issue by supplying 4 different forms of Copper, which help deal with all the different forms of Copper deficiency that can occur. You can also feed **Grennan's Early Graze Calf nuts**. These contain the maximum permitted levels of Copper with 50% of it in the more expensive chelated/Bioplex form. Also, we have found at farm level that 2 Cosecure lamb boluses administered to the calves, 7 days before turnout have been very effective.

Its important to note, for Copper to be effective in a Molybdenum toxicity situation it needs to be available within the rumen that's why a lot of Copper boluses, injections and drenches are ineffective with the exception of the Cosecure Lamb bolus.

Where problems with Molybdenum toxicity have arose, calves have responded well to buffers, yeast and adding fibre to their diet. Generally calves may need to be rehoused, put back on milk and given rumen powders to get the rumen micro flora up and running again.



MANAGING DIET ENERGY DENSITY IN EARLY LACTATION

By Damien Guinan - (B.Agr.Sc) – Ph: 086 607 4729



Maintaining energy density in early lactation dairy cows is vital to ensure a healthy and productive lactation. Spring grass is one of the highest energy feeds available for cows. However, having received higher than average rainfall for February and March, conditions for early grazing have been limited. Hopefully, April will provide better opportunities to get to grass. Our Mega Milk Nut is the perfect complement for cows at grass, where silage still makes up a component of the diet, as the high energy levels balance the excess protein levels in the grass. Excess protein should be avoided in so far as possible as protein stimulates cows to mobilise body fat for milk production. This will affect cow condition which will in turn affect cow health and fertility performance.

Maximising the energy density of the diet is also critical for maintaining milk protein and has been an issue on many farms this spring with the later turn out of cows onto grass. Typically, milk protein can be 0.3% lower than the lactation average in early lactation. It is important to recognise the difference between a normal milk protein and a depressed milk protein, as this may indicate an energy deficit in the diet. A good figure to keep in

mind is the butterfat : protein ratio. The ideal figure here is 1.3 : 1. A high ratio here can indicate an energy deficit in the diet. Whereas a low ratio can show a fibre deficit in the diet or sup-optimal forage intake.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your current milk results or want to talk about your cow's transition period, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Greennans team.

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