

## **Preparing for winter; forage update and amino acids...**

Cows are being brought in, tups are getting put to the ewes and maize crops are pushing on with many considering when best to cut! In this month's newsletter, we have a grass silage update to what is expected this winter and talk about protein efficiency, including protected amino acids to support cow production without increasing costs.

### **Winter forage update...**

- It is that time of year where grass growth and quality is diminishing. Time to bring cows in (if they are not already) not only protect milking qualities, but also for pasture health. The turn in weather will only lead to poaching and destroying residuals if cattle are left out for longer than they should ought to be, which can have negative impacts on the next grazing season.
- With the recent feedback from forage analyses labs, energy levels have dropped compared to last year, due to grass growth continuing with warmer winter temperatures which have resulted in more mature and less digestible drops. The sugar levels are also recorded to be lower on average, as well as lower crude protein levels by around 1%!
- Reviewing your forage analyses, what went well and not so well last year, and what you need to tweak to support your livestock's health and performance this winter!

**Table 1: 2022 and 2023 Grass Silage averages**

	2023 Average	2022 Average	Dif.
Dry Matter (%)	30.9	30.7	0.2
Sugar (%)	0.9	1.9	-1
Crude Protein (%)	14.3	15.3	-1
ME (MJ/kg DM)	11.1	11.4	-0.3
D- Value (%)	69.4	71.5	-2.1
NDF (%)	44.5	46.1	-1.6
Lignin (g/kg DM)	40.1	38	2.1

Source: ED&F Man, 2023



**Add molasses to optimise forage this Winter:**

Molasses blends can offer an ideal combination of rapidly fermentable carbohydrates (RFC) along with Regulated Release protein to balance the reduced fermentable proteins in silages.

Faced with this winter's silage and milk price: feed price ratios, it makes sense to see how molasses blends can be added to diets to promote a more efficient rumen to make better use of forage.



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## Protein efficiency...can adding amino acids save you money?

- Typically UK dairy diets run at around 17 to 18% crude protein, where diets are balanced on amino acids crude protein levels can be 15% or less resulting in better protein or nitrogen efficiency.
- Nitrogen Use Efficiency (NUE) refers to the amount of milk protein produced divided by the dietary intake. In the UK this can be approx. 25%. Meaning for every 1kg of milk protein, 4kg of dietary protein was fed.
- Some herds have achieved a remarkable 35% NUE, feeding 3kg of protein for 1kg of milk protein which can be done through balancing the diets for amino acids. This can reduce the total amount of crude protein fed, reduced protein waste and resulting in a significant saving in the diet.
- Dairy cows require amino acids supplied through protein in the cow's diet. Methionine is the first limiting amino acid in the UK dairy cow diet, and it is estimated that 85% of UK dairy cow diets lack sufficient methionine. This deficiency causes cows to spare methionine from fertility, immunity and milk protein synthesis to maintain milk yields.



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