



The Farm Consultancy Group

Issue 93 -  
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Welcome to our 93rd edition of the newsletter. Included in this months newsletter are articles on a new consultant appointment, direct debit payments, coccidiosis, milk powders, using fats in your cow's diet, commodities updates and heat stress.

Your feedback and comments are most welcome. If clarification is required, please contact the article contributor or for more articles and news visit [www.fcgagric.com](http://www.fcgagric.com).

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## New Consultant Appointment for Sherborne Office

Colin Robertson has joined the Sherborne Office of The Farm Consultancy Group as a Consultant.

After graduation in 1999 with a BSc Agric (Hons), Colin moved to America where he designed, built and managed two 1,700 cow high yielding herds plus youngstock for an absentee owner including a team of 35 Hispanics.

From there he moved to Australia where he managed 3,500 cows plus followers on a grazing platform milked through two 50 point rotaries with a transient team of 30 predominantly back packers.

In the UK, Colin worked as a farm consultant for two years for a national consultancy company and has managed herds of all types from organic to high yielding herds and until recently milked his own herd of 270 pedigree Holsteins on a 5yr FBT.

Colin's expertise covers all dairy farming operations large or small, with particular emphasis on nutrition, cow comfort, fertility, protocols, staff management, milking machine troubleshooting and financial planning.

Colin will provide a wealth of practical experience and knowledge on all aspects of dairying and will ideally complement the existing skills within our expanding team in Sherborne. Colin can be contacted on 07496 760242 or at [colinrobertson@fcgagric.com](mailto:colinrobertson@fcgagric.com)



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Please contact Bridgette in the office to send you an electronic link to do so. Moving forward all split payment fertiliser purchases this summer and autumn will be set up to be paid electronically as part of our terms of trading.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact either Andrew on 07717 442888, or Bridgette on 01935 850993.



# How Much is Coccidiosis Costing You? - Colin Robertson

Here at FCG, farmers have been contacting us due to an increase in coccidiosis seen on farm.

Coccidiosis is THE NUMBER ONE cause of scouring calves on farm. Once a farm has coccidiosis established, unfortunately it is here to stay.

Below are the estimated costs of coccidiosis affecting your farms profitability and future herds health.

Based on replacement rate of 25% on a 200 cow herd	
Mortality 1% directly associated	£125.00
Treatment costs (50 calves @£2.70/treatment)	£135.00
Medicated feed (50 calves @2.5p/d for 8 weeks)	£70.00
24 days difference in daily live weight gain (Andrews 2008)	
Increased feed costs for 24 days (assume £1.65/day)	£1,980.00
Lost milk for 24 days (assume 20 litres @0.27ppl)	£6,480.00
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>£8,790.00</b>

No account made for the effects on calving pattern, seasonality, labour, increased housing/stocking rate or indirect mortality.

With spring calving over for now, and autumn calving just around the corner, there is never a better time than now to review your coccidiosis control and calf rearing practices. Contact Colin by e-mail [colinrobertson@fcgagric.com](mailto:colinrobertson@fcgagric.com) for a one to one appraisal.

## Milk Powders - Andrew Jones

It's time to plan for calving this autumn with ordering your milk powder.

Milk powder selection seems to be very subjective. We primarily supply Trow and The Calf Company milk powders, but also have access to a range of different powders to suit your needs. Your first decision must be, do you want to use a skim or a whey-based powder?

**A Skim based milk powder** will make a calf bloom more and best if selling them at market. Skim powder makes calves more content for longer between feeds. It clots more like jelly and lasts longer in the calf's stomach so takes longer to digest, therefore feeling fuller for longer.

**A Whey based milk powder** is better for someone looking for faster growth rates and heifer rearing. This is because it will clot more like custard which is easier to digest and make the calf feel hungry again, allowing it to either drink more or look for more solids and therefore grow more quickly. It may even be better to feed 3 times a day rather than twice a day.

Your next choice must be the crude protein percentage of the powder. Don't be fooled by some of the higher protein powders. This is not necessarily "good" protein that can be used easily by the calf and so the calf wastes energy expelling this excess protein. A recent research paper has shown that replacement calves did best on a mid-level protein powder, i.e. 21-23%.

Once a day feeding is deemed unsuitable by DEFRA for all calves under 28 days of age.

Contact Andrew on 07717 442888, for a competitive price to suit your needs.



# Not All Fats Are Created Equal - Andrew Jones

With increasing feed (cereal) prices, you may already be, or are, considering using a fat in your cow's diet but are you using the right fat? Fats can play an important role in achieving the correct energy density (M/D) of your diet, particularly during this current hot weather with reduced appetites. Most people think to use either a calcium soap-based product or a straight C16 product, but are these the right products to use?

**A recent study observed, "Just as we recognise that not all protein sources are the same, it is important to remember that not all fatty acids or fatty acid supplements are the same."**

There are distinct differences among fatty acid digestion, metabolism and impacts on milk production, reproduction and health:

- C16:0 (palmitic) – Production (milk & butterfat—but only has a 40% influence on butterfat))
- C18:0 (stearic) – Dry matter intake & milk production
- C18:1 (oleic) – Replenish body reserves
- C18:2 (linoleic) – Immune function, reproductive performance (embryo development) – Essential Fatty Acid
- C18:3 (linolenic) – Elongated to C20:5 (EPA) & C22:6 (DHA), immune function, reproductive performance (embryo survival) – Essential Fatty Acid.

An Essential Fatty Acid is like an Essential Amino Acid, it is one that must be supplied to the animal as it cannot produce it themselves.

A series of trials have shown;

- C16:0 – increased energy-corrected milk (ECM) but did not affect DMI in both fresh and peak periods
- C16:0 – supplementation induced greater bodyweight (BW) loss and increased markers of lipolysis when fed in the fresh period
- C18:0 – increased DMI but had no effect on yields of milk or milk components
- C18:1 – increased supplementation of C18:1 increased ECM & positive BW change

Therefore, supplementation of the right combination of these products may help you obtain the results you desire for your herd.

**To see if you are effectively using C16 supplementation in your herd, call Andrew on 07717 442888 to provide a Milk Fatty Acid Profile report as discussed in a previous article.**

# Commodities Update - Andrew Jones

In the last month the pound has weakened both against the dollar and the euro and oil price has increased. The GDT price index has seen a drop of -1.3% & -1.2% in last month's auctions. Globally, the European weather is being seen as the stabiliser for global milk price.

**Milk Powder** - Prices have again remained static for July but there is certainly upward pressure on milk powders, so maybe think ahead for the coming autumn calving season?

**Feed - Soya prices** are down £30/t in last month. Spot price would be high £340s/t, and currently about +£5/t for winter. **Rape prices** have remained static and haven't dropped in line with Soya.

With a £60/t drop in Soya in the last 2 months, now may be time to take a little bit of cover for the winter.

**Wheat & Barley** have remained stable over the last month, but have just started to rise this week due to weather concerns on yield and more crops being wholecropped for Livestock.

**Fertiliser** - As this went to press last month, the new season prices came out and were greeted with what can only be described as an anti-climax as they were only down about £5/t on existing prices. However the market moved quickly and prices rose as expected until they are now approximately where they were during last winter.

New Season Urea is now being offered by a couple of suppliers but with a worldwide shortage of nitrates, reduced production capacity in China and rising oil & energy prices, they have only been going one way! On a global scale our urea prices are matching those from overseas. I have offers of Sept-Dec delivery pay January 2019. There doesn't appear to be any downward pressure on the Urea market, at this point in time.

**Call Andrew on 07717 442888 today, for up to date prices or for a specific quote.**

# Heat Stress - Andrew Jones

Heat stress can be an issue when temperatures exceed the comfort zone (thermo neutral zone) of 25°C, known as the upper critical temperature (UCT).

At temperatures above the UCT, cows become highly stressed and use two main control strategies to maintain thermal balance:

1. Increasing heat dispersion, in particular through evaporation, by increasing subcutaneous blood flow and exhibiting the classic signs of heat stress of panting and drooling. These activities increase the maintenance energy needs of the animal by an estimated 20% so reducing that available for milk production. Sodium and potassium requirements increase, the latter being the primary osmotic regulator in sweat glands of cows.
2. Limiting heat production - by reducing all activity and changing the feeding pattern. As the majority of heat production in dairy cows is essentially due to rumen fermentation, the cow will reduce her DM intake by 10-30% and be selective in what she eats, namely less roughage. Roughages increase rumen activity and therefore heat production.

Temperature Humidity Index (THI)									
Relative Humidity %									
C	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
22	66	66	67	68	69	69	70	71	72
24	68	69	70	70	71	72	73	74	75
26	70	71	72	73	74	75	77	78	79
28	72	73	74	76	77	78	80	81	82
30	74	75	77	78	80	81	83	84	86
32	76	77	79	81	83	84	86	88	90
34	78	80	82	84	85	87	89	91	93
36	80	82	84	86	88	90	93	95	97
38	82	84	86	89	91	93	96	98	100
40	84	86	89	91	94	96	99	101	104

No heat stress  
Moderate heat stress  
Severe heat stress  
Dead cows

Also, rumination, which produces heat, decreases dramatically. Rumen acidosis becomes a concern, further exacerbated by the reduced saliva flow into the rumen associated with slobbering. Varying manure consistency is the classic sign.

The impacts of heat stress are seen on dairy units as decreased milk production, with lower milk fat and protein content, loss in body condition, fertility issues, higher incidence of mastitis and hoof claw issues leading to more lameness.

The solutions are both management and nutritional as follows:

1. Ensure that water is easily and freely available at all times, and whenever possible maximise access to shade. Spray water over the cows at milking time in the collecting yard especially in the evening time when the sun is on the wane. Remember that cattle sheds can be more humid and warmer than paddocks unless properly managed and ventilated.
2. Maximise the energy density of diet to counter reduced Dry Matter intakes.
3. House cows by day and turnout out to grass at night.
4. Buffer feeding is key. Reducing the quantity of silage in diet and increasing the concentrate. A daily intake of around 7kg NDF is needed for rumen health and butter fat production.
5. The feeding of mineral supplements to ensure correct dietary mineral balance especially lost Potash & sodium salts through sweating can be helpful.



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Contact Andrew on 07717 442888, for more practical tips on managing your livestock in the hot weather.