



The Farm Consultancy Group

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Welcome to our 95th edition of the newsletter. Included in this months newsletter are articles on seed updates, managing your cashflow, environmental hygiene powder, costs of drought to dairy farmers, commodities updates, energized milk powder, covers for manure stores and our credit broker licence.

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.

Edited by Gerard Finnan of David Bardgett Ltd and The Farm Consultancy Group Tel:

Seed Update - Andrew Jones

Grass Seed: All seed is currently in short supply, with 2018 crop already being used to fill demand (grass seed is normally used the year after production), so expect ongoing supply issues for grass & forage seed supply next year.

Currently seed prices are being quoted on a case by case basis, even on our standard mixes, as supplies become tighter and tighter.

Cereal Seeds: These are also in short supply and seeing an increase in price. We are able to source seeds from a number of suppliers.

So, if you are looking for fast growing grass seed after Maize, seed for autumn cereals or Cover Crop seeds, contact Andrew on 07717 442888 for your requirements and I will come back to you with prices and availability.

Cashflow Management - Phil Cooper



At the recent Gillingham and Shaftesbury Agricultural Show, I spoke with a number of agricultural bank managers from all the main banks. All the banks realise that this has been a tough spring and summer for all types of farm businesses and they are keen to support people with additional financial help if required.

What was also clear though is that they do not like last minute surprises. They much prefer businesses to plan ahead and make their bank aware of the likely capital requirements well in advance. There's nothing worse than getting a phone call on a Friday saying, "I need an extra £5,000 to pay the contractor's bill on Monday". Not only is that difficult for any bank manager to sort out, it also reflects badly on the business as it is clear there has been no forward planning.

We often get asked what's the point of budgeting and producing cashflows given there are so many variables, e.g. weather, input prices or commodity prices. That is true, but the purpose of a budget and cashflow is to enable the business to see if it is viable and what the impact will be if input or output vary. It also allows both the business and the bank to access the capital requirement for the year.

Given the weather impacts and rising input costs set for this winter, it is essential to plan your capital requirements now and talk to your bank so that they can work with you. If you would like help completing a budget and cashflow please contact Phil Cooper on 07798 673665.

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A copy of this newsletter can be downloaded from our website @ www.davidbardgett.co.uk



Mistral - Environmental Hygiene Powder - Andrew Jones

Recently David Bardgett has taken on a new supplier of products, The Olmix Group from Brittany in France. They are a company very interested in natural algae-based solutions for nutrition, hygiene and health for plants, animals and humans. Their aim is to reduce the reliance on farm antibiotics and already have pig & poultry units across Europe, where they have reduced usage to both zero and negligible levels. Mistral is a bedding powder that is a 100% natural product combining carefully selected ingredients from natural origins with synergistic properties: Micronised clay, encapsulated essential oils and trace elements.

Mistral has been used effectively in farming practices for over 20 years and has aided in reducing mastitis and SCC (63% over a three-month period - AgroParisTech exp farm) and decreasing the onset of Digital Dermatitis lesions (38% in field trials on 3x working farms) using as a dry footbath. In addition, Mistral has also been proven to reduce ammonia emissions responsible for respiratory issues and appetite loss in calves, decreasing mortality. Mistral Benefits Include:

- High drying capacity
- Non-irritant for tissue and mucosa
- pH neutral
- Ensures a clean and dry environment around the udder
- Decreases the risk of udder contamination
- Limits bacteria development through humidity control
- Improves atmosphere
- Essential oils & expectorant with anti-stress properties
- Decreases the risk of digestive and respiratory troubles in calves
- A preventative tool for sustainable action



It has an unrivalled drying capacity, is animal welfare friendly and has EU organic certification, therefore would be suitable for use in organic farming operations in the UK.

Please contact Andrew Jones on 07717 442888, for more information.

How Much Is Drought Costing Dairy Farmers? - Gerard Finnan

Based on average grass growth rates of 25 kg/ha/day less than normal for say 60 days over the summer, is equivalent to 1.5tDM/ha and combined with the cold late spring another 0.5t/ha was lost. If a farmer is stocked at 2 Cows/ha, this equates to 1tDM/cow in lost homegrown forages be it silages or grazed grass. Less contracting costs may have been incurred and less fertiliser has been applied and whatever grass has been grown has been used better saving maybe 0.7ppl in costs.

But on the negative side, feed costs have been rising due to demand, quality forage replacers are in short supply and a lot of silage made this spring has already been used.

To replace the 1t DM /cow shortfall with 50% forage/50% concentrates plus feeding it back to cows will cost £230/cow or 3ppl over all litres produced, if the forage can be sourced.

Milk production is falling, and this has cost £50/cow so far. Milk will be shorter in supply in the winter and next spring, but milk price isn't increasing significantly. Livestock prices have fallen due to more animals being culled to reduce feed demand.

Taking all the factors monetised above, the net cost of drought will be 3ppl or £45k for a 200 cow herd. For some who took action early and bought at lower prices it will be less, for some who haven't taken action yet, it may mean drying cows off early or even ceasing production completely.

If you haven't done a comprehensive review of your forage stocks, do so asap and assess your shortfall and put of plan of action in place as soon as possible. Contact Gerard on 07976 426420 to discuss your options to reduce the shortfall.



Commodities Update (3rd Sept) - Andrew Jones



Over the last month sterling has continued to weaken against the dollar and the euro and oil prices are rising again. The biggest factors currently affecting the markets are Brexit and the Chinese/American trade war. The GDT price index has continued to decrease, despite the droughts in Europe and Australia. It is only the weaker currency that is keeping our milk price at its current levels.

Milk Powder - Prices have again seen a small increase this month, reflecting a weakening pound. This trend is expected to continue for the remainder of this year, and so will increase the pressure on other suppliers to increase the price.

Feed - Soya has dropped approximately £30/t over the last month due to better harvests in the US, and the reduction of exports to China. It is now at that rare point that Soya is cheaper than rape per percentage of Protein, as rape prices have started to decrease but not at the same pace as Soya. Wheat & Barley have remained relatively stable over the last month.

Fertiliser - The headline news currently, is that urea is now £300+/t on farm, and not looking like it will come down in the foreseeable future. This is on the back of a further increase of £20/t by both CF & Yara for AN, so is now over £270/t on farm.

We are also seeing an increase in prices for Ps & Ks with a recent quote for DAP up nearly £40/t in just three months.

For up to date quotes and orders contact Andrew Jones on 07717 442888.

Energized Calf Milk Powder - Andrew Jones

Trouw Nutrition have just launched a new milk powder that builds on their LifeStart programme. LifeStart science is based on higher energy levels and a balanced mineral supply in calf milk replacers.

Milkivit Energizer is the first in a range of Energized Calf Milk (ECM) products. It has been formulated to support the LifeStart objectives of:

- Optimal Development
- Resilience to Disease
- Longevity

This innovative new product has been developed using whole milk as the biological reference. This means that the calf receives a balanced nutrient supply to encourage optimal development whilst supporting the health of the calf.

ECM is high in fat ensuring the calf gets a high level of digestible energy. The balance of vitamins and minerals within the formulation means that the calves get the best possible LifeStart.

Osmolality level has also been carefully considered due to it being a risk factor in calf scour. Osmolality measures the concentration of solute particles in a solution and is calculated by adding the concentrations of sugars and minerals. Milk replacers with elevated levels of osmolality can damage the gut, increase the risk of abomasal bloat and exacerbate diarrhoea severity in sick calves. The osmolality level of ECM is closer to that of whole milk, than powders currently on the market.

The new range of ECM are based on the results of extensive research, moving the nutritional profile of milk replacer back closer to cow's milk. The outcome is a product differentiated for farmers looking for high levels of performance from their calves.

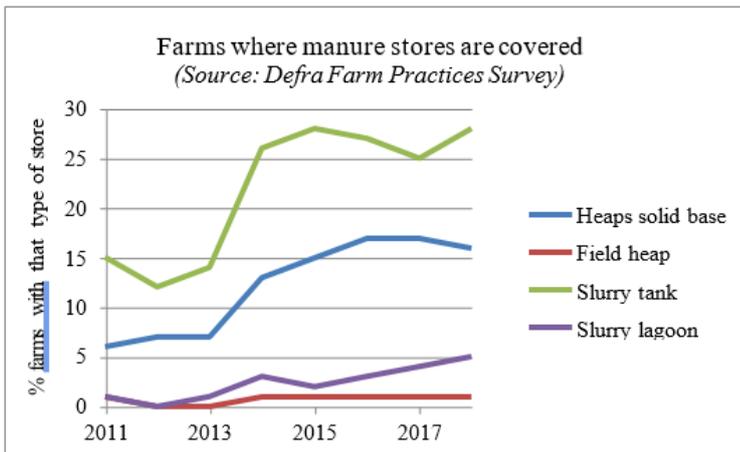
Energized Calf Milk is the best of whole milk combined with the best of calf milk replacer.

Contact Andrew Jones on 07717 442888, for more details or any issues relating to calf rearing.



Covers on Manure Stores - Phil Cooper

Around 11% of total agricultural ammonia emission in the UK occurs during manure storage. The value of this loss is around £15 million per year. Installing a cover can help to reduce losses of nitrogen as ammonia and help prevent dilution from rain water. If proposals in Defra's Clean Air Strategy 2018 are adopted, covers will be a requirement in England from 2027.



Rigid covers can reduce ammonia emission by around 80%. Floating covers and sheets over solid manure heaps can help lower emission by around 60%. The surface crust that forms naturally on slurry stores can help reduce ammonia emissions by around 50%.

The British Survey of Fertiliser Practice indicates use of covers on slurry tanks and sheets on manure heaps has increased over recent years but few slurry lagoons and hardly any field heaps are covered.

Covers for slurry stores are more likely to be economic especially in areas with high rainfall.

There is little point in using manure store covers to reduce ammonia emission if this just postpones the emission until the manure is spread. They should be used alongside incorporation within 24 hours, slurry injection or trailing shoe. Application of FYM to established grassland presents a particular problem, as the manure remains on the surface. Where feasible, it is better to incorporate the FYM on arable land or before grass re-seeding.

If your slurry store is not covered, check suitability and cost for a rigid cover for a tank or floating cover for a lagoon. There could be grant funding under the capital element of the Mid Tier Stewardship scheme to help with the cost.

Ensure spreading methods minimise losses by incorporating into the soil within 24 hours. Make sure you allow for the nutrients provided by organic manures and slurries in your fertiliser plans.

For more information on the above or help with fertiliser plans, contact Phil Cooper (FACTS) on 07798 673665.

Credit Broker Licence – Ed Warren

Midwest Consulting Ltd has just been granted a credit brokering licence which is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). This means that the business can broker the best farm related lending deals for your banking needs. This may mean getting the right lender to finance your unusual farming circumstance or just getting the best deal that suits your needs.

Ed Warren (ex-agricultural manager) is providing this service and will be using his experience and contacts with all the major and minor lenders to agriculture in the region to source funds for the farming industry.

So, whether it's restructuring lending, looking to change banks or funding a whole new enterprise/land or property purchase, contact Ed Warren on 07434 723443.



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