



The Farm Consultancy Group

Issue 116 - June 2020



Welcome to our 116th edition of the newsletter. Included in this month's newsletter are articles on Rainexo tarpaulins, year-end management accounts, livestock health plans, commodities updates, short-term forage fillers, Rural Protect insurance, rationing programmes and feeding co-products.

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.

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Rainexo Tarpaulins For Ultimate Protection - Steve Willats

The range of Rainexo tarpaulins are 100% waterproof, frost proof and have a 5-year UV protection warranty.

Tarpaulins are typically made from woven material with water proofing sprayed on, however the Rainexo tarps use a cross lamination process which ensures the 100% waterproofing. Due to the cross-lamination, the composite is completely recyclable, tear and puncture proof while being chemical resistant, too.



Purchasing farmers will also benefit from a five-year guarantee. The new design also helps to absorb UV rays and dissipate the heat at a lower level. The special manufacturing process provides good tensile strength with strong balanced tear resistance in multi directions.

Rainexo cross laminated tarps will outperform any woven option lasting five times longer making them more economically beneficial as well as being 100% recyclable helping with plastic recycling.

See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcuSTtNv3Wg>

Contact Steve at Tel: 07395 498175 or steve@davidbardgett.co.uk for more information on sizes and prices.



Management Accounts Ready for the Accountant? - Annabel Hole

With March 31st still the traditional year end for most farming businesses, now is the time to ensure that the accounts year end is completed. You need to ensure all your invoices have been inputted correctly to the right analysis codes by checking through the nominal audit trail or ledger. Ensure all transactions are reconciled through the bank to end of March. Loans (if any have been taken out) have been split correctly and align to closing loan balances at 31st March. Ensure livestock and deadstock valuations at year end are added along with the closing debtors and creditors.

The accounts may now be ready to be sent to your accountant, but there is a lot of information about your business trading to be gleaned from this data before your tax accounts are produced. Look through the reports and compare the data to previous years and benchmark data. If you have a consultant, they should be helping you do this and add value to your hard work over the last 12 months.

If you require help with completing the year end to get it off to your accountant, please contact Annabel, Tel: 07980 294816 or email annabelhole@fcgagric.com

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



Why Do A Livestock Health Plan? – Steve Willats

Do you do a plan just because you need to for Red Tractor? How often do you refer to it? Health plans should be a live document that provides a framework of the ways in which you can prevent or deal with key disease challenges in the herd or flock, but with the flexibility so that they can respond to the things that are more difficult to plan for.

Any time is a good place to start, but now is a good time to think about planning ahead of next calving/lambing season and making sure that this year's crop stays in good health.

Where Do You Start? Sitting in front of a blank screen can be a really difficult way to start. This is where I can help as an advisor to help set this up for you. Ultimately, we have to make this your document by changing and adapting it to what works best for you.

Here are some questions which you can ask to get started...



What have been the main health challenges over the last few years? Which times of year pose more challenge (e.g. lambing/calving/turnout/housing)?

What are the main reasons for veterinary assistance and medicines? What is the feedback from the abattoir?

When you do have problems, which group of stock are affected the most? How have you dealt with these issues before and were they effective?

Is there an earlier intervention, preventative measure or vaccine? Are there other treatments?

Who is responsible for administering and recording medicines and disease issues? How do you monitor problems?

What is your quarantine plan for all stock that moves on and off the farm? How does this fit into the overall biosecurity plan? What is your plan for euthanasia and deadstock?

The answers to these questions will help us formulate your plan. Give Steve a ring today on Tel: 07395 498175 or steve@davidbardgett.co.uk to help you get started.

Commodities Update (02/06) - Andrew Jones

In the last month the pound fell five cents against the dollar but has now recovered this back. Against the euro it has fluctuated to be a half cent weaker than a month ago. Oil has continued to recover to \$40/barrel. Ethanol production in the US, where usually 40% of their annual crop is used for biofuels, has dropped dramatically in last three months.

GDT has been stable over the last month with minor increases. Cheddar has fallen. UK milk prices depend purely on who your processor is and what markets they supply.

In Australia the opening new season prices have been set at AU\$6.50/kgMS. This equates to 26.3p/litre @ 7.38% MS. Last year the opening price was 28.5p/litre.

Milk Powder - Prices have remained stable this month, but whey prices appear to be firming, while skimmed appears to be softening.

Feed - Over the last week, due to a lower Pound, proteins have fallen sub £300/t for soya, and rape sub £200/t. Cereals have risen due to dry conditions, but good harvest forecasts elsewhere and surplus maize/corn imports from US will put a ceiling on wheat prices. Speaking to suppliers there is currently ample supplies of feed available to cover current shortfalls.

Fertiliser - New season pricing was announced last week, with prices sub £200/t as expected. There is still some availability on AN, ST & DT. Please call regarding your requirements. New season urea prices are now available at similar prices to two years ago.

Will we see better I do not know, particularly if oil prices continue to recover? Contact Andrew Tel: 07717 442888 or andrew@davidbardgett.co.uk for up to date prices on your specific requirements.

Forage Fillers Short Term Options - Gerard Finnan

With grass growth plummeting at the end of May (the highest growth month in the year), it is concerning this early in the season that grazing shortages as well as winter silage shortages are arising. You can sit tight and panic slowly and the rains will hopefully come and replenish shortages. This may be a strategy for the winter but how can you address the short-term situation. Cows are milking well and stock growing well on the high quality, high dry matter grazed grass which has been in excess of 12ME so far this year. Cows are bulling well and you want to maintain performance and get them in calf. What are your options?

1. Bring back in **aftermaths from early first cut silage**. You are eating into winter stocks, but this is quality feed.
2. Feed back some **baled silage made from surplus grazing grass** that was gone too far. Again, excellent quality. Cost £130/t DM Including feed losses.
3. **Zero Graze grass** away from grazing animals if you have the grass. Cost £100/t DM. The issue will be trying to maintain a consistent feed in a growing sward over a time period.
4. **Pre mow or strip feed silage covers**, if still available. Assuming you have the grass, water availability will have an impact on this decision. £65-£85/TDM.
5. **Increase Cake** though less scope to do this on these high yielding fresh calvers. Cost £260/tDM
6. **Feed Bulk Co Feed products** such as Brewers Grains, & Other Moist blends 40-50% DM. Best Fed with silage. Cost £230/t DM
7. **Feed Palm Kernal Expellers (PKE)** at 3-6kg/hd/day self-regulated through a feed trailer in a paddock to up to 300 cows. Cows self-regulate intake as it is bitter, but it is a direct replacer for high quality grass at £190/t DM. As this is a dry feed there is minimal storage and feeding out waste as it doesn't rain! Yes, this is three times the cost of grazed grass. PKE also increases milk butterfats.

The simplicity of handling and feeding makes it an attractive short-term option to feed on its own or with bulk forages.

Options will also depend on individual situations. Don't neglect the winter situation for too long. Budgeting on Hope and Could can be very dangerous this early in the year in a high stocking rate situation.

Contact Mark on 07984 785190 or at markyearsley@fcgagric.com to look at your nutrition options for the short and longer term this year.

Rural Protect Insurance - Andrew Jones

Recently DBL have negotiated with BKG West Insurance Brokers to offer group members a direct discount on their insurance costs. BKG West specialise in providing high quality, advice led insurance packages to farming businesses, ensuring the best cover at the lowest possible premium. Buying Group members benefit from a 15% discount on their broker commission, subtracted from their final invoice. One policy that we thought was of real interest was BKG West's Rural Protect Insurance policy.

Every day on farm you are facing constant scrutiny from various Regulatory and Enforcement Agencies, i.e. HSE, EA & Trading Standards. Even if a defence proves successful, the costs of expert representation can be devastating to a farming business.

Rural Protect management liability is a legal defence product, available through BKG West Insurance brokers, that has been specifically designed for farming and rural businesses. The policy provides expert advice and support throughout an investigation or prosecution, and even covers the HSE fees for intervention as standard (currently £129 + VAT/hour).

For this and all other defence cases covered by the policy there is a no Prospect of Success clause, which means that you will receive the same level of representation and support, even if you have accidentally breached the rules! Expert legal advice and representation is provided by rradar, a specialist commercial legal firm with a proven track record of supporting rural businesses.

All communications between policy holders and rradar are fully confidential.

Clients are supported with an unlimited advice line, a Crisis Line for emergency situations and access to a huge library of advice and model clause documents. The Rural Protect product also gives access to rradar Report, an online portal which facilitates the reporting of serious accidents to the HSE as required by the law.

For further details and to receive an insurance quote call, Andrew Jones on 07717 442888 or email andrew@davidbardgett.co.uk



Funny Eating Habits? - Tom Malleson & Helen Rodgers MA VetMB MRCVS DBR

Many grazing-based herds around the country are seeing an increased prevalence of "Pica" this spring. This is the term for cows eating unusual objects, such as stones, plastic, string etc (see picture).

This is a sign of trace element deficiency – particularly but not restricted to Phosphorous and Sodium. The reasons for these deficiencies are not fully understood, but anecdotal evidence from the southern hemisphere suggests this is a common phenomenon in dry weather. The prolonged wet winter may also be a factor.

Blood testing animals may give an indication of the specific problem on each farm. Thankfully, many of these deficiencies are easily and cheaply corrected.

- Sodium – free access lump rock salt
- Phosphorous – liquid phosphorous supplement to add to drinking water



If this is an issue on your farm, now might be a good time to revisit your mineral programme in consultation with your vet.

Not all imbalances have a clinical effect and the quality of products available to correct these varies widely. It is essential to approach such problems methodically. You need as much information at your fingertips as possible: blood sampling can be really useful for some trace elements/minerals, such as calcium, phosphorous, Vit E/ Selenium, but is less useful for diagnosis of other deficiencies such as copper caused by ingestion of antagonists molybdenum and sulphur. Liver biopsies can provide complementary information to blood sampling. The mineral content of fresh grass or silage is really important to analyse and can be done relatively cheaply. Don't forget to test your water if you are on a borehole.

Knowing the mineral spec of your cake is also essential (beware – there are large differences between suppliers), as is the concentration of minerals available to the cow from the various treatment options. Make sure they are going to correct and maintain the mineral imbalance to within the optimal range before you buy. Ask your vet or nutritionist to check your diet (including any treatment options) through their Rationing programme to ensure basic mineral intakes will be met and maintained.

For more information contact Tom at Tel: 07496 760242 or tommalleson@fcgagric.com or your Vet, for more information.

Feeding Co-Products Can Save Money! - Andrew Jones

Many people think that feeding co-products/moist blends is only something to do when they are short of forage and use them exclusively as forage replacers (which many of my customers did successfully in the 2018/19 season).

However, have you thought about using them as a concentrate replacer? The aim should be to maximise home-grown forage use, with 65-70% of your Dry Matter from forage. Concentrates are the most expensive part of diet. You want to be feeding as little as possible, while ensuring a balanced ration that meets the requirements of your animals & your contract. Not only can a moist blend reduce the cost of your ration, due to it being cheaper than a traditional blend or straight, but it will increase the palatability and thus the ration intake, which increases production. One client in 2018/19 stated that the moist blend was worth an extra 1.5litre/cow/day through the winter.

Usually a moist blend is 45%DM, so about half that of a blend/compound, you have to feed double the product approx. fresh weight. Recently, with a client we were considering not feeding the Winter fed Moist Feed in the Summer ration (full TMR so will always feed a buffer) and replace it with more of the farm's home milled blend (Soya, Soya Hulls, Rape & Barley). There was nearly a £70/t DM saving to be made, so we kept it in diet saving £500/cow per year!

At end of May our usual moist feeds supplier said that COVID-19 affected supplies initially, but supply is now almost back to normal for products like Brewers Grains. People might not be going out to drink, but they are drinking more at home.

So if you are short of forage, or just want to look at making savings by swapping some of your current compound/blend for an alternative that could help increase production, contact Andrew at Tel: 07717 442888 or andrew@davidbardgett.co.uk and take a look at your ration options of a moist feed this coming year.

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