



# St David's Farm Newsletter

November 2009

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St David's Farm Practice Ltd,  
Nutwell Estate, Lymington, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 5AN.

## New product for Aggers Pumps

The manufacturers of the Dr Agger drenching sets have added a new product to their range of supplements that can be used to drench cows.

This is 'Off Feed' and as you might imagine is specifically designed for inappetant sick cows. It is formulated to correct dehydration and the electrolyte disturbances associated with inappetant cows as well as containing Gentian root as an appetite stimulant.

This is another useful product in the care of sick cows increasing greatly our ability to give these animals the fluid and electrolyte support in the volumes they need when ill. Many of you have now purchased your own drenching sets and reports back up what we have found ourselves that these pumps are very helpful for fresh as well as sick cows.

The range of products now includes;

- Fresh Cow – lots of calcium and some energy to get cows off to a good start post calving. Much more calcium can be given this way than is in calcium 'bottles' and it raises blood calcium levels for much longer. We also stock calcium oral paste which can be given without a pump and again is a more sustained supplement than 'bottles'.
- Restore – this is rehydration powder much like calf scour powders. Excellent for cows with severe mastitis or metritis, where rehydrating them is one of the main aims of treatment.
- Off Feed – As above for inappetant sick cows
- Glycerol Plus – For ketosis glycerol provides more energy than propylene glycol does. This also contains yeast as a rumen stimulant.



## Health Planning consultations

For many farms it is twelve months since the last thorough review of your records, problems and performance.

Health planning does not need to be a tick box exercise but should be an

opportunity to use your records as evidence to plan improvements.

Office based consultancy time or on farm meetings are charged out at £50 per hour. We will review your records in advance, direct discussions and provide a concise written report working with your nutritionist or consultant as necessary.

## Vigilance for Bleeding Calf Syndrome

We recently had the first case of Bleeding Calf Syndrome confirmed from a client's autumn calving dairy herd

The cause of this disease remains unknown but poisoning and adverse drug reactions are among the suggestions. The SAC and VLA are working hard to try and understand

this new condition and it is essential that you contact us about any suspect cases. It affects calves less than four weeks old and clinical signs can include bleeding from the ear tag holes, nose and mouth and blood in the faeces. Some calves die suddenly before any signs are seen. Live suspect cases can be blood sampled free of charge and any unexplained sudden death in calves needs investigating by post mortem at the VLA so please call us if you have a suspect case.



## Training courses

I would like to thank everyone who has attended the various training events over the last few months.

The feedback has been really positive and it has been rewarding for us to see those skills being put into practice on farm. We have one more scheduled event – a mastitis for milkers course in the Okehampton area in early December.

There is still 50% funding available through the Rural Business School for more courses so although we have no dates fixed please add your name to the list of interested people by phoning the office. When there is enough interest we will set up a course for you. We can run bespoke training events for individual farms or groups of farms which are also eligible for funding. The following courses are available:

- DIY AI (4 days)
- Calf health (half day)
- Mastitis for milkers (half day)

- Foot trimming and lameness prevention (1 or 2 days)
- Worm control (half day)

The *Mastitis Control for Milkers* course will be held on December 7th in Northlew near Okehampton. The cost is £25 per person including lunch. Please call Paula in the farm practice office for more information and to book a place on **01392 872934**. Numbers are strictly limited as this is a small group discussion and practical workshop.





## Raw material update

**Soya** – The trade had expected a bearish market during the American harvest, which was forecasted to be at record levels, but harvest is being delayed by poor weather conditions causing concerns in the market. With the exchange rate working against us, now is not the time to jump in, forward prices at £230p/t for next summer suggests this winters cost should reduce to close the gap between them.

**Soya Hulls** – Hulls have remained fairly static, theres an abundant supply of high fibre materials available so price increases look limited. Next summers £88p/t looks reasonable and may attract some buyers.

**Sugar Beet** – With a record beet harvest there is a plentiful supply of product for the winter and most certainly next summer, Trident are doing their best to hold onto prices but imports are forcing them to rethink costs.

### Raw material prices

	Aug 09	Sept 09	Oct 09
Hipro Soya	£280	£295	£295
Wheat Distillers	£154	£149	£163
Sugar Beet	£125	£123	£120
Soya Hulls	£88	£93	£93
Rapeseed Meal	£130	£128	£135
Wheat	£85	£99	£104
Barley	£77	£88	£95

**Wheat and Barley** – Yet another big crop, added to this a drop in demand, a large carry over from last year no wonder prices were under pressure. I didn't expect prices to rise until the new year but strangely we have seen some upwards movement during October, due to a slow corn harvest in the states keeping supplies tight this concern has spilled over into the wheat position.

**Molasses** – Good news as early reports suggested potential price increases for the winter, with supply and demand easing this winters costs are very competitive. I would recommend contracting your Molasses through to

April, products like Regumaize adds both protein and sugars very cost effectively.

**Rapeseed Meal** – The use of Rape this year will most certainly go through the roof, be careful not to over feed as it has a lower digestibility than Soya and will pass through the cow. Soya looks bearish as we progress though the winter so remain spot on all proteins as I'm sure prices in the new year will reduce.

**Steve Symons – 01884 256256**  
(Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays)

## Winter feeding 2009/2010 – low silage energy values

This summer's variable grass silage-making season has resulted in very variable silage quality, presenting many farmers with challenges this winter.

Silage analyses results show a large range in metabolisable energy (ME) concentrations from below 9.5 MJ/kg dry matter (DM) to a few over 12 MJ/kg DM, which will have a major impact on the potential of the forage to help meet ME requirements of high yielding cows.

Assuming an intake of 10 kg of silage DM, a difference in ME concentration of 1 MJ/kg DM (e.g. silage with ME of 10 compared to 11 MJ/kg DM), would result in 10 MJ less ME intake from the poorer quality silage, broadly equivalent to 2 litres of milk.

Many producers now target a specific energy density in the total ration, particularly for early lactation cows. Energy density is calculated by dividing the total energy intake (MJ per day) by the daily dry matter intake (DMI) (kg). A likely target ME concentration of 12 MJ/kg DM, for high yielding cows, can

	Ex.1 –11 ME silage	Ex. 2 – 10 ME silage
10kg DMI from 13 ME dairy compound	130MJ	130MJ
10kg DMI from grass silage	110MJ	100MJ
Total ME intake	240MJ	230MJ
Total DMI	20kg	20kg
Energy density (ME)	12.0 MJ/kg DM	11.5 MJ/kg DM

	Ex. 3 – 10 ME silage + Megalac
10kg DMI from 13 ME dairy compound	130MJ
9.5kg DMI from grass silage	95MJ
0.5kg Megalac	16MJ
Total ME intake	241MJ
Total DMI	20kg
Energy density (ME)	12 MJ/kg DM

be difficult to achieve while maintaining a balanced ration when silage energy levels are below the 10mj.

Whilst cereal prices are now looking more favourable for feeding, adding energy from cereals to boost energy density has limitations. Starch from cereals ferments rapidly in the rumen, so feeding too much can tip the rumen towards acidosis, thereby negating any gains made on paper from the extra supply of energy.

One way to safely lift dairy cows' energy intake is by including Megalac<sup>®</sup> protected fat in the ration. Adding half a kilo per cow per day of Megalac

typically lifts total ration energy density by 0.5 MJ/kg DM.

Presently the economics of supplementing with Megalac are better than ever. Feeding 0.45 kg of Megalac will have a cost approaching that of the value of a litre of milk, so any extra milk response seen over a litre is profit. Independent trials prove Megalac protected fat lifts yields on average by 2.3 litres/cow/day, translating to an increase in profit of £1000 per month for a 100 milking cow herd.

For further information on feeding Megalac this winter please give us a call.

