

April 2011

Maximising Feed Intake in the Dairy Cow

Healthy cows eat 10-12 times a day for 30-45 minutes-a total eating time of 6 hours. Cows like to rest for 14 hours, and 10 hours are spent ruminating.

Did your cows eat enough today? - look for the danger triangle!

If you can see a hollow triangle on the left flank behind the last rib then this cow didn't eat enough today.



In the pictures, the cows are bothered by the neck rail; eating in diagonal positions, showing obvious neck injury and the danger triangle.

A healthy cow will chew each cud 55-70 times. If this figure is less than 55, coupled with an empty rumen and thin manure, there is a lack of roughage in the diet.

How to get 24kg dry matter intake per cow per day?

Feed space - more space is more feed intake!

Cows are herd animals so they all like to eat at the same time so always ensure that you have one feeding place per cow. Farms with 70cm feed space per cow have twice as many cows pregnant after 150 days in milk when compared with farms that have 35cm feed space per cow.

Feed access - Cows are flight animals and like to have an escape route to avoid conflict with boss cows. Make enough passages to the feed fence - one every 20 cubicle spaces, and avoid dead-ends.

On many farms the cows are bothered by the feed fence, either the top rail injuring necks, or shoulders damaged by feed barrier divisions. Move your neck rail forward 25cm and your cows will eat more.

Sort your lame cows - Lame cows only eat 4 times a day - look at their empty rumens!

April 2011

Feed availability - Can your cows access feed 22 hours a day? (allowing 2 hours for milking). Is there feed available through the night? Push feed up regularly and particularly last thing at night. The more leftover feed you remove from your fresh cows the more they eat. The best farmers take away 5-10% of leftover feed from the fresh/high yielder group and give to the youngstock.

Sorting - If you see many hollows in the feed pile the cows are sorting, in essence licking out the concentrate or straights. Try better mixing or make the mix a bit wetter so the good parts will stick better to the roughage - 40-42% dry matter is dry enough.



If you don't want to have too much difference in the ration between cows you need one feeding place per cow. This gives them an equal opportunity to select the best bits out at the first feeding!

Locatim - A Colostrum Supplement.



Locatim is a colostrum supplement that contains antibodies for protection of the calf against neonatal diarrhoea. Locatim is a highly concentrated dose of the antibody portion of colostrum and is obtained from donor animals vaccinated against E.coli, Rotavirus and Coronavirus.

The product should be used when the quality or quantity of colostrum is reduced or suspected to be reduced. It should be given in addition to colostrum and is not designed as a replacement.

Locatim should be given ideally within the first 4 hours after birth and no later than 12 hours after birth.

Locatim is priced at £16 per calf dose.

Practical Measures to Prevent and Manage Bovine TB in your herd

In conjunction with the NFU and NADIS we are co-hosting a workshop on bovine TB which will be held at the Doveridge Village Club on Wednesday April 12th starting at 7.30pm.

There will be presentations from DEFRA, a NFU representative on badger ecology and wildlife risk management and John Cammack from the practice on general biosecurity.

Please contact the Farm office if you are able to attend to assist with the catering arrangements.