



The
GEORGE
Farm Vets

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR FORAGE - AND DEFRA UPDATE!

JUNE 2024

Summer has arrived! Hopefully you've found a stretch of dry enough weather to get field work done.



Firstly, some news hot off the press – DEFRA have announced that they will be providing additional support to those of you who have completed the Annual Health and Welfare Review. In what they are describing as 'bolt-on' funding, they will offer an additional:

- £215 for cattle with no BVD (no positives on test completed)
- £837 for beef cattle where BVD is present in the herd
- £1714 for dairy cattle where BVD is present in the herd



The initial offer paid for the milk/blood samples, BVD testing and some other health/productivity-related task. DEFRA now recognises that once BVD has been identified on farm there are more costs associated with eradication. We've been advised that this extra funding will be available from the summer. Eligible farms will have completed the AHWR.

It's not too late to apply for the AHWR and as with this 'bolt-on', the implication is that it will open the door to other avenues of funding in the future.

More information to be found about the grant and this news at:



[Pathfinder - The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Newsletter \(defra.gov.uk\)](#)

Although the initial hard work of getting first cut grass silage baled/clamped is over, there is opportunity to start planning for the winter by getting it analysed. Silage is a significant part of the winter diet, so if it is poorer or better than usual this early information can give you an idea of what supplementary feeds will be necessary. Your feed company will likely test your samples for free, if not, we can organise sending them away to be tested.

Taking samples:

1. Wait until six weeks after harvest.
2. Take several cores across the clamp at least 1.5m deep, or from five bales of the same batch to make it representative.
Sample different cuts and fields separately.
3. Pack into an a bag that can be sealed and made air tight.
4. Drop into the feed company/vets early in the week so it gets to the lab before the weekend.
5. Include as much information on the bag as possible:-composition/cut/storage/additives.

COMPASSION RESPECT INTEGRITY SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESSION CARE

T: 01666 823035 Option"1" for visits or enquiries, "2" for medicines or shop, "3" for TB testing

Below is some of the information you will receive back:

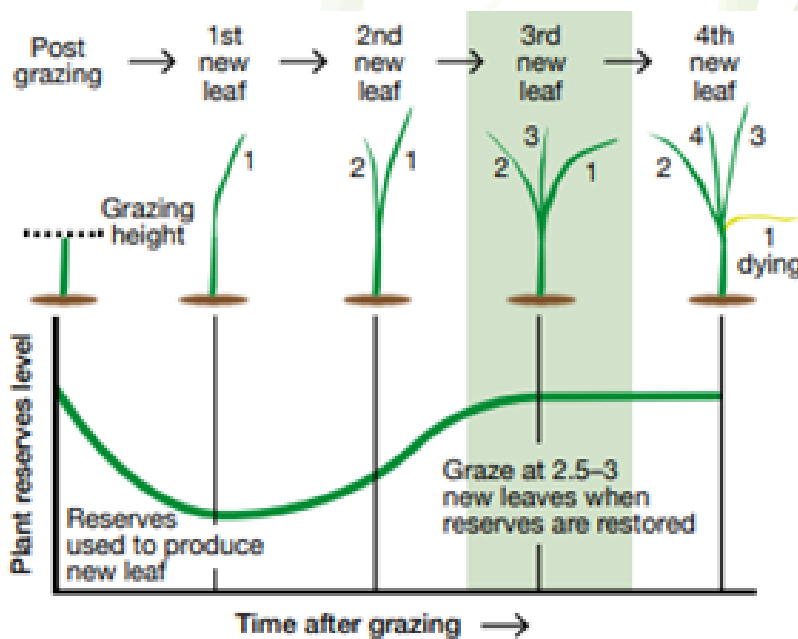
- Dry matter (wetter silage can reduce intakes so nutritional requirements aren't met)

Targets

| | |
|-------|---------|
| Clamp | >25% DM |
| Bale | >30% DM |

- D – value -Digestibility, higher values mean less concentrates are necessary to get energy in. Should be around 70% in a good silage; 58% and less is considered poor
- Metabolisable energy- this is the usable energy content. Should be greater than 11 in a good silage; less than 10 may need supplementation from other sources
- Crude protein- indicating protein content should be greater than 14% in good silage; less than 10% is considered poor
- pH -should not be above 5 or below 3, too acidic and intakes will drop due to palatability.

Driving between farms we see all sorts of grass management practices, from set-stocking to rotational grazing. The management chosen is largely down to best use of hedgerows, fencing, water-troughs, convenience and tradition. As you notice grass growth varying over the summer months consider your practices and if you can see any means of squeezing more efficient growth from your swards.



Perennial ryegrass is the UK's most commonly sown grass species, growing one leaf at a time until a fourth leaf grows and the first dies off. Grazing at the fourth-leaf stage is less efficient as the plant has expended the energy to make that first leaf, but it hasn't been utilised by the grazing stock.

Therefore, if stock graze before the fourth leaf grows, there is less wastage, less shading out of growing plants and less dead material to host disease.

How stock graze a sward will vary depending on:

- previous under-grazing allows grass to become woodier and less palatable, whereas over-grazing reduces grass growth.
- composition, stock may avoid weeds.
- previous high stocking densities which lead to heavily dunged areas of grazing cattle often avoid.

The more understocked an area is, the less control you have over sward heights. If cattle are set-stocked and staying in the same fields for weeks, you can easily imagine some of the grass in those fields will be on their fourth new leaf, or more, before it is grazed. The previously mentioned negative impact this has on efficiency means the cattle are only utilising 50% of what grass could be grown! If you change your strategy to one that gives some areas rest whilst increasing grazing pressure on others, the yield can go up by around 20%.

Find out more information regarding sward measurement, pasture cover and common grazing strategies in the AHDB's 'Better Returns' guides.

VET TECH UPDATE...

Don't forget it's the friendly flies season, contact us for more information.

All the best, Joe

MEETINGS COMING UP...

****Summer Course Programme - 2024****

AHPA Approved AI Course, 3 days, £515+VAT:

- 17th-19th July – Chippenham & Kemble
- 11th-13th September- Location TBC

BCVA CHCSB Lantra Approved First Aid For Feet with Tom Morris, 1 day, £300+VAT:

- Wednesday 24th July- Old Sodbury

BCVA CHCSB Lantra Approved Intermediate Foot Trimming with Tom Morris, 3 day, £800+VAT:

- 18th-20th September- Old Sodbury & Pewsey

Short Course Series, afternoon courses:

- Assessment and Care of the Sick & Down Cow Management: Tuesday 9th July - Kemble
- Youngstock Care & Management: Tuesday 30th July – Iron Acton
- Calving the Cow: Tuesday 6th August- Malmesbury

For more information or to book a place on any of our courses please call the office on:

01666 823035 Ext. 1 or E:technical.training@georgevetgroup.co.uk

BERKELEY SHOW

SUNDAY 30TH JUNE

**COME AND JOIN US FOR A
DRINK AND SOME MARSHFIELD
ICE CREAM**



BEEF AND SHEEP MEDICINE HANDLING COURSE:

**11AM - 12PM - @ The Practice,
Thursday 20th June - £75 + VAT**



**Contact us on
01666 823035**