



RESILIENCE AUGUST 2022

Resilience

As prices of feed and fertilizers become less predictable, making a business plan resilient is key. This means you can cash in when sale prices are good and still ride out the times when prices dip. This is not purely about limiting all input costs but about considering all areas of efficiency.

Forage quality and quantity is a key way to make your farm more resilient. This results in less of a need to buy in concentrates which, with the current world markets, are looking more volatile than ever. Ensuring forage quality is a vital first step, cutting silage early ensures high protein and digestibility. Once cut, ensure a good wilt time is key whilst getting good weather to get the dry matter correct. A conditioner on the mower will help lessen the wilt time required which can be useful when the weather is less predictable. Once the grass is in the pit compressing the silage fully to remove all air is key to producing quality silage, even those hard to reach corners! Ensuring all plastic on the sides is still hole-free, and suitable for use is important. The use of "cling film" is becoming more common, and proven to lessen wastage in most systems. Fully weighting down the pit with either tyres, mats or gravel bags. If using tyres ensure they are of good quality and not likely to allow metal wire to enter into the feed and cause disease in cattle.



Drought tolerance

As weather becomes less predictable the grass growing season also changes. Most people now believe in human created global warming and the curve seems to be ever increasing with increase snow melt and changes to the jet stream meaning that dry hot air is more likely to be pulled up from south Europe. This in turn means less predictable rainfall, often showing as floods through the winter and droughts through the summer.

MEETINGS

*Tuesday 13th September, 7pm,
on Zoom - Preparing for Housing*

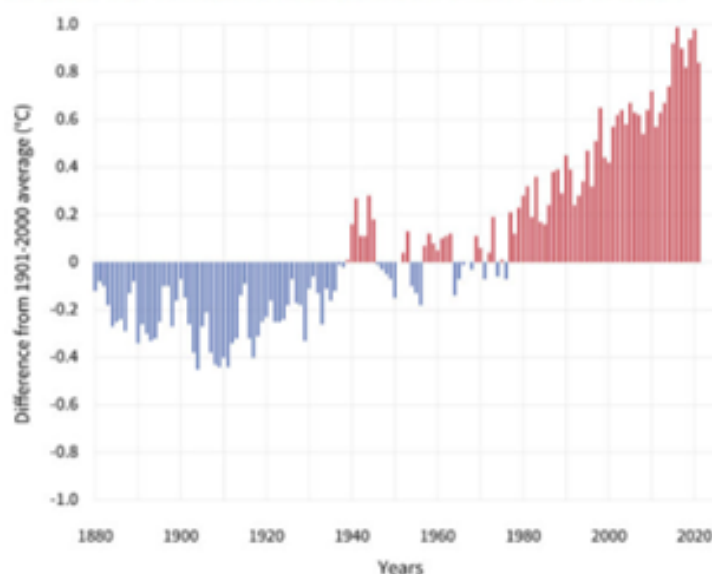
*Friday 23rd September, 11am-1pm
Beef and sheep medicine course
@ The Practice*



COMING UP....

*Beef and sheep. Should I be worried
about worm resistance?
Date and venue TBA*

GLOBAL AVERAGE SURFACE TEMPERATURE



Plant Selection

Ryegrass has many good points; however, drought tolerance is not one of them! The roots are only a few inches deep so as soon as the surface dries out the crop goes into a dormancy mood and burns off.

Other grasses such as cocksfoot do have deeper roots; and herbs such as chicory or legumes such as lucerne, sainfoin or red clover have by far the deepest roots and are best suited to drought conditions. Also these deep roots are helping aerate the soil, reduce compaction and bring up minerals which may be less available at the surface.

Legumes

With the price of inorganic fertiliser sky rocketing over the last 12 months finding ways to improve soil health and nitrogen fixation are high on most people's to-do list. Legumes, most commonly in the form of clovers are often added to grass leys to increase protein levels and nitrogen fixation. If you dig up a clover you should see nodules on the roots and if you open one of these they should be a brown to dark red colour to show that they are working.

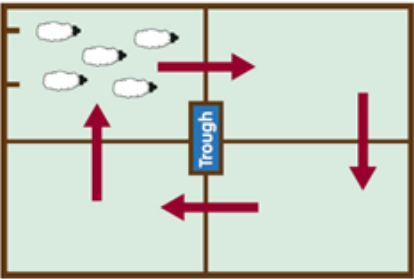


The way we graze forage also affects both the yield we can get off a set field and also the quality.

By moving from a set stocking grazing system to a rotational grazing system the amount of grass is said to double. Also the quality will remain higher for a greater proportion of the year and it is possible to keep grass in front of the stock in a dry spell.

Rotational grazing

Stock is moved around a small number of fields based on sward height or grass cover targets, or after a certain number of days.



Pros
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher productivity than set stocking• Allows the pasture to rest and re-grow• Can extend the grazing season• More even manure distribution
Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More fencing required and water provision increases cost• Forage production and pasture utilisation is not optimal

Soil Health and bio diversity

Healthy soils will hold more water and so help during these dry summers. A water infiltration test can be completed to see how quickly and how much water your soils will hold and this will improve within just a few years.

For more details on how to carry this out AHDB have created a video:

<https://ahdb.org.uk/Videos/greatsoils-the-infiltration-test>

Interested in this area of increasing yields from forage and resilience? Why not join our sustainable farming group, where we meet twice a year to discuss different topics.

Sustainable Farming Incentive has now been launched and part of the intermediate level is to have carried out soil tests and have a soil management plan in place.

Best wishes, Kat Hart



VET TECH - UPDATE

Our vet tech team of Rosie, Zoe and Toby have been busy freeze branding in the last few weeks. This is a new service we can offer to our clients, so please ring the office if you are interested.

