



Davidsons Animal Feeds Grow Their Nutritionist Knowledge!!

Davidsons Animal Feeds, have expanded their technical sales force to include a new Sales Graduate Scheme, which complements our growing external technical sales team.

The Davidsons Sales Graduate Scheme allows young agricultural graduates the opportunity to use their nutritional knowledge and make a difference within the livestock sector in Scotland and the North of England. The ruminant livestock market in the UK has been challenging over the last few years. As a key supplier within our industry we are striving to ensure we are doing everything within our means to support our customers.

Davidsons Animal Feeds are proud of our 40 years history in working within the ruminant animal sector. We strongly believe ruminant feed companies should be an integral part of every farms livestock management systems. Over the last few years we have heavily invested in our sales staff training to gain recognised qualifications in ruminant nutrition through Harper Adams University in Shropshire and through the Feed Advisor Register. Allowing us to work with our customer to help deliver a better future for both of us.

Jim Cairns



Seaweed – The New Old Protein Source

With increasing pressure from supermarket meat buyers to reduce our reliance on imported feed sources such as soya, there is an ever increasing need to source local, sustainable alternatives.

With thanks to the judges from Interface Food & Drink's legacy competition Davidsons Animal Feeds have teamed up with *The Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS)* to test the viability of using commercially produced seaweed in animal feeds. This research will focus on the viability of an innovative pre-treatment process of seaweeds to produce a nutritional and sustainable supplement for feed products.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Seaweeds have a long history of use as livestock feed.
- Seaweeds have a highly variable composition.
- Green (30% crude protein) and red seaweeds (50% crude protein) contain higher protein but lower minerals than brown seaweeds (14% crude protein).
- Seaweeds can contribute to the protein and energy requirements of livestock.
- Prebiotic compounds in seaweeds may help to enhance livestock production and health.
- Research suggests seaweed in cattle and sheep diets could reduce methane production by 70%.
- Ensure the entire range of micronutrients vital to growth, performance and disease resistance without the attendant dangers of deficiency or toxicity which may accompany formulated feed additives.
- Increase beneficial bacteria and the condition of the gut to enhance immunity and the uptake of other feed nutrients particularly on low grade rations.
- Secure the nutritional balance most significantly for debility and recovery, fertility, reproduction, gestation and in the newborn, and during other periods of stress.
- The best example of this is the sheep on North Ronaldsay.

Lauren Frew

Sheep Road Show

Following the success with our recent Sheep Road Show which took part in The Scottish Borders and North England with 4 venues and over 150



farmers attending we are looking to branch out with future shows of this nature including beef and dairy events.

Key messages from our discussions and presentations with industry experts were:-

- Know your forage to plan ewe feeding
- Sel-Plex plays an important role in improving muscle tone, colostrum quality & early lamb performance
- Grouping ewes by litter size and body condition to target your feed use
- Target good quality protein sources in ewe feed pre lambing for optimal colostrum production
- High metabolic energy requirements particularly at critical time - three week post and pre lambing

Check inclusions of the following from the bagging labels of your current feed:-

- B12/Cobalt
- Selplex Selenium
- Vitamin E

Quality raw materials only, no fillers.

Correct vitamin and mineral inclusion is vital for in lamb ewes 4 to 6 weeks before lambing to ensure lamb viability, milk quantity and good quality colostrum.

Check our Website and follow us on Facebook @davidsonsfeed and Twitter @davidsonsfeeds for future upcoming events.

Steven Turnbull

Should We Feed Forage To Calves?

It is known that rumen development requires a good source of fermentable carbohydrate to produce volatile fatty acids (VFA). Therefore good quality calf starters typically contain a high concentration of starch.



Like the dairy cow, calves are subject to ruminal acidosis. When fed high levels of quickly fermentable carbohydrates the pH of the rumen can be significantly lowered to levels that can cause problems. The form in which these starches are offered can also accelerate this problem. Feed manufacturers grind down raw materials in order to compound the feed into a pellet.

This gives the rumen microbes more surface area to attack the carbohydrates, speeding fermentation up.

A less processed concentrate such as a rough mix means the starches are only freely available once the calves chew and crack the grains. This means a release of starch over a longer period of time, limiting the risk of acidosis. By feeding a forage source along with starches, the production of saliva will help buffer the rumen, lowering the risk of acidosis.

Both physical form and quality affect forage intake within the calf. Calves will favour chopped hay over long and may also prefer better quality hay over a starter pellet in some cases.

When designing a ration for the calf it is necessary to have the right balance of starch and long fibre. Too much starch too early will lead to acidosis, but too much long fibre will not produce the VFA's required for optimal rumen papillae growth. As forage is less energy dense than a starch based concentrate, calves will struggle to intake enough energy on forage alone. This is because the bulky forage will fill the space within the digestive tract, therefore lowering appetite.

It is therefore recommended that when fed a pelleted concentrate, forage is to be offered at around 5 to 6 weeks of age. If offered a lower starch or less processed ration, this could be extended to 7 or 8 weeks of age. Following weaning, concentrate intake will increase rapidly, so it is important that forage is readily available in order to limit the risk of acidosis.

Samuel Wellock

Nutritionist Advice



Nutritionist Fergus Crowch has over 9 years experience in the dairy industry from herd management to farm management in both intensive and extensive systems in the UK and New Zealand. Fergus is passionate about helping farmers optimize their resources/opportunities to excel on farm performance covering Dumfries and Galloway.

Milk Grass

How could we make the most of the cheapest home grown feed on farm, grass!!!

Does freshly harvested grass suit all systems?

One of the biggest limitations of feeding fresh grass is dry matter intakes, for example a 40 litre cow eating 24kgDM/ of TMR, at 45%dm will mean a fresh intake of 53kg. If the cow was fed solely fresh grass at 18% DM she would have to eat 133kg to maintain production, this would be surpassing her capabilities. Although grass is a very cheap and good quality feed source it has its limitations in producing large volumes of milk, a cheap feed that reduces milk should be looked upon as an expensive feed.

Quantity (grown/utilized)

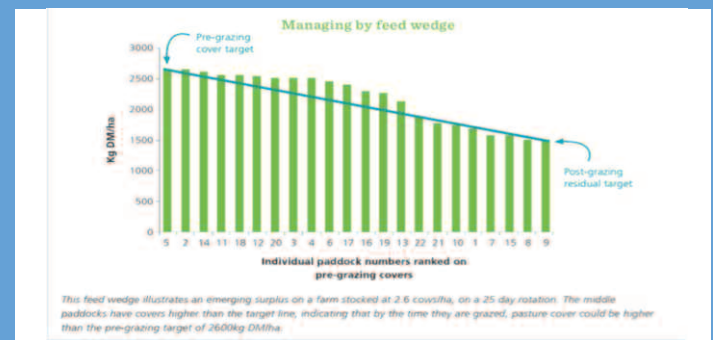
To manage grass right it is essential to measure individual paddocks at least fortnightly to determine grass growth, which can then be inputted into appropriate software to display information.

The largest gains to be made in growth for the season is by extending your grazing season. Start when you have a decent average farm cover (2400kg/ha) and ground can carry not by a date in the calendar.

Main things to look at to improve utilisation; calving pattern, stocking rate, infrastructure, break size and consistent residuals.

Keeping quality throughout grazing season;

Main points for keeping quality throughout the grazing season; is hitting consistent residuals between 1500-1650kg/DM/Ha, staying on top of average farm covers by adjusting round length to suit growth rates, cutting silage at the correct times and have a planned fertiliser programme.



The Davidsons team will be able to assist with fortnightly farm walk on farm measuring grass for each paddock to quantify quantity we will also be able to sample fresh grass from individual paddocks to quantify quality. Using the NIR machines we will be able to test the next weeks grazing quality and have a more accurate handle on rations and expected outcomes in advance.

What value would that have on our business?

Estimated costs of the following inputs into a lactating cow clearly shows the value of utilising quality forage on farm.

Type	Grazed grass	Zero grazing	Silage	Concentrate
Cost/tonne dry matter	£40	£70	£100	£200

Quality forage is the base to any good diet the trick is matching the quantity and type of forage to maximise margins in your system.

Show Dates 2017

Ayr	Sat 13th May
Scotlands Beef Event	Thur 8th June
RHS	22nd-25th June
Dumfries	Sat 5th Aug
Turriff	30th-31st July
Agriscot	Wed 15th Nov
Livescot	Sat 25th Nov