

Summer feeding strategy

We have seen strong demand for molasses based liquid feeds this winter as farmers recognise the unique benefits they bring to ruminant rations. Increased intake, improved fibre digestion and reduced sorting being key to maximising performance. We expect this strong demand to continue through the Summer.



Market Update

After an extended period of relatively flat global molasses prices where currency was the major price driver, we are now seeing the market firm. This is driven by several factors:

1. World prices are increasing due to strong demand for ethanol into government driven renewable fuel programmes.
2. Ongoing low sugar prices have led to a reduction in global sugar production and a knock-on reduction in molasses availability.
3. Ocean freight costs are rising and will rise even further as of 1 January 2020 when the low sulphur fuel initiative comes into effect. The new rules require ships entering European waters to run on low sulphur fuel and/or have sulphur reduction equipment installed.
4. Currency continues to be an issue for imports into the UK.
5. Other liquid co-products also remain relatively expensive as the Biogas industry continues to take significant quantities, reducing availability into the feed sector.



Even with the increased price, ED&F Man's range of **high performance** molasses based liquid feeds, represent excellent value for money. We have seen an increased uptake in our tank finance scheme as farmers want to take advantage of using a molasses blend. When you look at the top performing dairy herds in the UK, over 90% of them use a molasses blend - that can't be coincidence!

Summer Feeding Options

The addition of sugars to a ruminant diet via a molasses based liquid feed, has a significant effect on both fibre digestion and microbial protein production, which are two key drivers for maximising animal performance. Improving rumen function and efficiency is fundamental to cost effective performance. Additionally, obtaining more nutritive value from home grown forage can reduce reliance on the more expensive bought in alternatives.

Current grass quality around the UK is averaging between M+5 and M+10. This is only just above animal maintenance requirements and is not providing high enough energy levels for optimum production. Therefore, it will be vital to compliment grazing with a buffer feed over the summer to enhance rumen fermentation and increase overall animal performance. Additionally, grass quality can become variable very quickly due to cold spells, too much, or too little rainfall. To tackle this variability, buffer feeding can offer a sound nutritional platform.

The key to a good buffer feed is to compliment grazing by enhancing the ruminant's natural ability for fibre digestion. As the vast majority of energy in grass is in the form of fibre, it is essential during summer to ensure good rumen function in order to increase fibre digestion. By creating an ideal rumen environment for fibre digestion, the rumen will be able to extract a greater nutritional value from the available forage.

Molasses based liquid feeds contain 6-Carbon sugars, which have been shown to be more rumen fermentable, more effective at improving fibre digestion and increasing microbial production. When sugar levels are increased to the optimum 6-8% with a high proportion of glucose and sucrose (6-Carbon sugars), the digestibility of the dry matter, NDF and ADF in the diet all increase, releasing more of the energy in grass to increase production from grazing.

Grazed grass has much higher levels of RDP and therefore the diet must also be matched in fermentable energy levels to make efficient use of this protein. The lack of fibre within fresh grass is also a challenge and can lead to reduced rumen function. Supplementation with straw and molasses within a buffer feed can provide the structural fibre necessary for rumen function and reduce the risk of SARA (**S**ub **A**cute **R**uminal **A**cidosis), as well as provide a source of readily fermentable energy to the rumen microbes to aid in the utilisation of protein.

Fresh-Guard: Preserving the value

With temperatures on the rise and expected to climb higher over the coming weeks, it is essential to start thinking about ration quality, whether this is buffer feeding or 365 feeding. When silage is exposed to the air, the bacteria present begin to grow and start to ferment the feed - this is called aerobic spoilage or secondary fermentation. It mainly occurs at the clamp face, or at the feed trough after the TMR has been fed out. The first sign of secondary fermentation is heating of the ration, it can also lead to the production of distinct off odours and deterioration in feed quality. The outcome of this is reduced feed intake, reduced animal performance and increased feed wastage. Maize silage and moist feeds can be particularly susceptible to secondary fermentation, and when this occurs the most digestible and valuable nutrients are lost first such as sugars and amino acids.

For example, a typical herd will be fed around 22kg dry matter (DM) of a TMR per cow per day. A 5% reduction in DM due to heating in the TMR would mean a loss of around 1.1kg DM per cow per day. If half of the lost DM is from forage, this equates to a 200 cow herd wasting 100kg of forage DM per day, which at an average of 30% DM, equates to 330kg/day of fresh silage or 10 tonnes per month wasted. This is forage that few farmers cannot afford to lose.



To aid in the prevention of secondary fermentation, **Fresh-Guard** can be used. **Fresh-Guard** is a ration conditioner that has been proven to reduce ration heating and secondary fermentation. This results in increased dry matter intake, better animal performance and reduced feed wastage. All this leads to increased profitability. **Fresh-Guard** can be added to any ED&F Man Liquid Feeds bulk blend at a cost.



Beef Feeding

ED&F Man recently met with David Hendy, a highly regarded independent beef consultant, to discuss the role of molasses based liquid feeds within beef rations. David outlined the four crucial points when formulating beef rations, irrelevant of the farming system. These are:

- Ensuring a nutritional balance
- Palatability
- Voluntary Feed Intake/Dry Matter Intake
- Simplicity and Practicality

David highlighted that, "Using a molasses based liquid feed in a ration is not only a simple and practical way of improving palatability, but also helps drive dry matter intake and improve rumen function. As an excellent source of readily fermentable sugars and energy, it also increases microbial growth and fibre digestion as well as improving overall TMR stability. This leads to a further increase in animal efficiency and therefore reduces costs and increases margins on farm."

All of these contribute to the four crucial points of beef rationing. David believes that beef farmers should always, 'seek professional advice when choosing a molasses based liquid feed to help focus on the appropriate product for the appropriate diet'. At ED&F Man, we pride ourselves on our expertise of our products and ability to offer a tailored product for each farmer. See contact details at the end of the newsletter to find out more.

Up coming events

19+20 Jun	Total Dairy, Stratford-upon-Avon
22-25 Jul	Royal Welsh Show, Pembrokeshire
14 Aug	Gillingham & Shaftesbury Show, N.Dorset
11 Sep	UK Dairy Day, Telford
02 Oct	The Dairy Show, South West

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Robotic Milking? Take a look at Robo-Mol



We have been working in conjunction with Lely Centre Yeovil to develop this new innovative product, **Robo-Mol**. With many herds across the UK making the switch to robotic milking, we at ED&F Man believe it is imperative that we offer the best molasses based liquid feed options to these farmers. By increasing the number of robot visits per day, it can be expected that production will increase even further, and this is where the thought came from for **Robo-Mol**.

We have now had several months of consistent positive results achieved across a number of farms through Lely Robots using a filtered robot-specific molasses based liquid feed **Robo-Mol**.

Encouraging animals to visit the robot for milking is key to driving production on farm.

Robo-Mol is currently available in 1000L IBC's delivered to farm.