

Autumn Information Sheet

Why do we supplement in the Autumn?

MILK, CONDITION, GROWTH, STRETCH OUT FEED SUPPLY, BALANCE AUTUMN PASTURE

What are we looking for in the grass?

Managing pasture quality and reaching target covers are the main issues with Autumn pasture. The quality of Autumn pasture is much dependant on the Summer conditions but it can be low in DM, variable protein, and often high NDF. These factors mean that the total diet needs to be managed to ensure:

- Suitable target DM intakes are achieved - difficult on low DM pasture as it takes longer to process through the rumen
- Excess protein is managed - uses more energy to process
- Any fibre issue is addressed – late Summer pasture may have high NDF, short regrowth may have low NDF
- Mineral status is considered when supplementing - especially when feeding maize silage (Mg, Ca as limeflour, NaCl & Rumensin)

Table 1. Typical nutrition profile of Autumn pasture compared to the ideal balance for a lactating cow.

	Autumn Pasture	Target	Sources and Balancers
DM%	15-25%	40-50%+	Molasses, PKE, Grain, Silage
CP (%DM)	20-32%	17-20%	Molasses, Grain (protein diluent)
NDF (%DM)	35-43%	30-40%	PKE, Silage, Fibre
peNDF (%)	18-30%	>23%min	Long fibre, Hay, Straw, Grass silage
Energy			
ME (MJkgDM)	11	11.8+	Molasses, Grain, Maize, Silage
Fermentable ME	8.0-9.0	10	Molasses, Grain, Maize, Silage
Net Energy	5	6.5-7.5	Grain, Molasses
Fermentable ME sources			
Starch (%DM)	1%	10-22%	Tapioca 70%, Grains 56-70%, Maize silage 35%
Sugar (%DM)	4-15%	8-15%	Molasses 63%

Where do the supplements go?

When we spend dollars on feed we need to know where it is going. In the Autumn, supplements will feed the cow's immediate requirement if there is a pasture shortfall (i.e. maintenance, walking, pregnancy) or will be used in a form of production.

Lactating cow feed requirements in the Autumn:

Milk Solids	Condition Gain	Growth/ Genetic Weight	Maintenance & Pregnancy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily milk production• Days in milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dry off at calving BCS (5+)• Easier to gain condition when lactating than dry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heifers still growing• Increasing cow performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If feed intake limiting• Small energy requirement for pregnancy

Where will my feed go?

Where the feed input ends up will depend on the cow/herd condition, breed, age, feed choice(s) and availability, management strategies etc.

If the cow is being fed a nutritionally balanced diet to maintain her functions, is well grown and in good condition then the majority of any additional feed will go to milk production.

1kgDM of extra feed intake is equal to 40-120gMS1.

If all of the feed input is not going directly to milk production then commonly it will be going to build cow condition. Although this is not as easy to see as 'money in the bank' the improved body condition score will be of benefit financially in the way of improved calving condition and subsequent production, animal health, reproduction performance next season, milking on for longer at the end of the season and Winter management.

Why not just dry off if pasture cover is low?

- Dry cows still need to be fed²
- Dry cows don't provide income
- 30-40% more energy required to put condition on a dry cow as compared to a lactating cow³
- Aiming to reach production targets
- Allowing growth of undersized stock

Other Autumn considerations:

- Post Zinc treatment (Facial Eczema) – Copper testing and supplementation
- Hoof health and udder repair
- No potash, lime or effluent to springer/calving paddocks
- Plan for Winter -enough fibre and crop, any energy supplements required?
- Plan to draft cows for calving dates so can properly transition
- Draft any light cows into one mob
- Spring cover targets

¹ 120gMS is exceptional

² Approximately 75MJ required for maintenance (dry or lactating) and 65MJ required for production of 1KGMS see page 13 of Agri-feeds Autumn Training Manual. ³ Approximately an extra \$14-17 for one condition score - see page 13 of Agri-feeds Autumn Training Manual.