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Milk Manager NEWS

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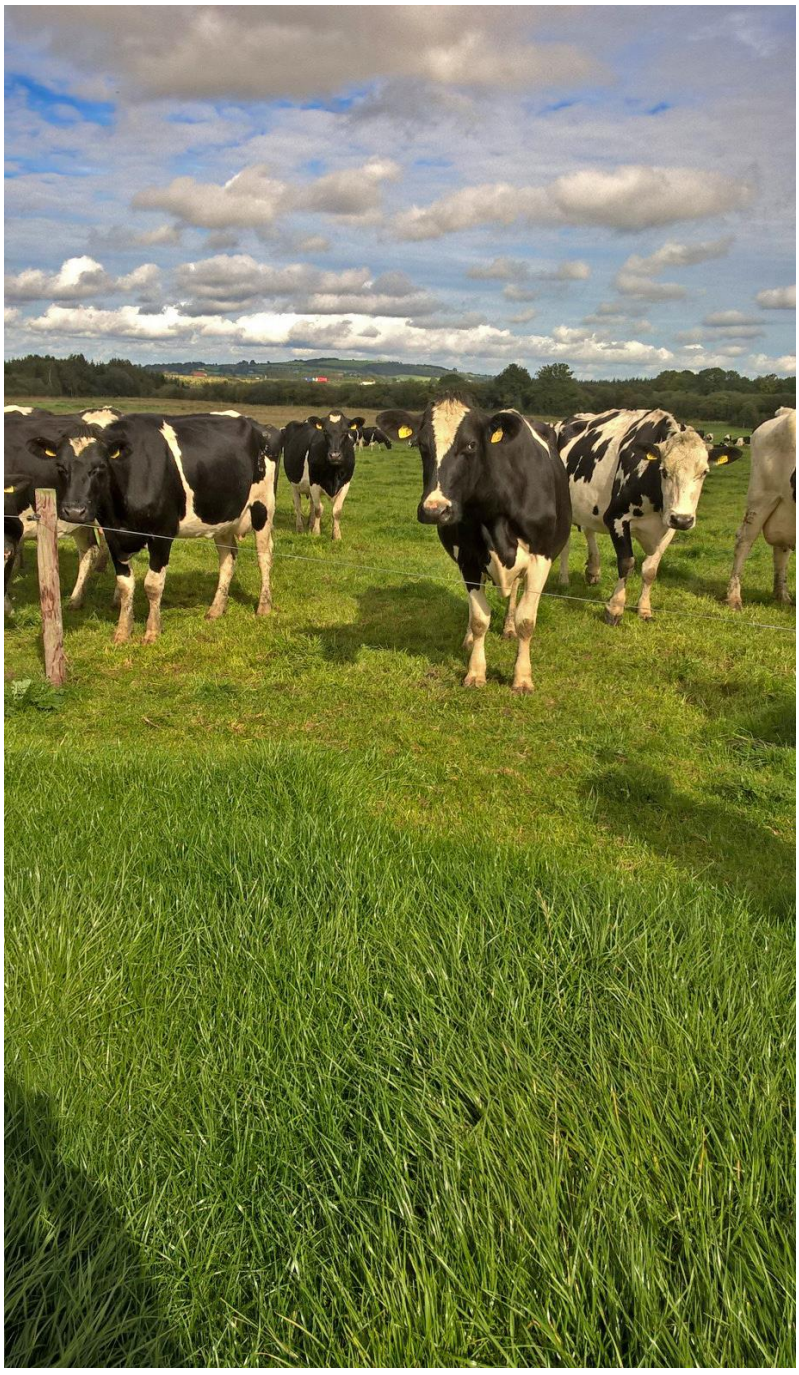

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Europe investing in rural areas

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Milk Manager NEWS

Market Update

UK Wholesale Dairy Commodity Market

- Fonterra's recent online GDT auction (2nd May 2017) showed an increase of 3.6% in the weighted average price across all products reaching US $3,166/t. Whole milk powder climbed 5.2% to $3,233/t, with skim milk powder falling 0.9% to $1,982.

- UK butter prices have continued to rise through April, on average between £50-£100/t over the March price. There is strong domestic and export demand, with little availability on the spot market. Cream prices have shown a similar trend, with demand continuing to outstrip supply.

Commodity	April 2017 £/T	March 2017 £/T	% Difference Monthly	April 2016 £/T	% Diff 2016-2017
Bulk Cream	1,730	1,690	+2	800	+116
Butter	3,725	3,650	+2	1,850	+101
SMP	1,500	1,550	-3	1,200	+25

Source: AHDB Dairy - based on trade agreed from 1st-27th April 2017

- Cheddar prices have fallen slightly in April. Fresh stocks are starting to build-up although there are limited supplies for sale. Although the mild cheese markets have been in decline over the last 4 to 6 months, prices are starting to stabilise.

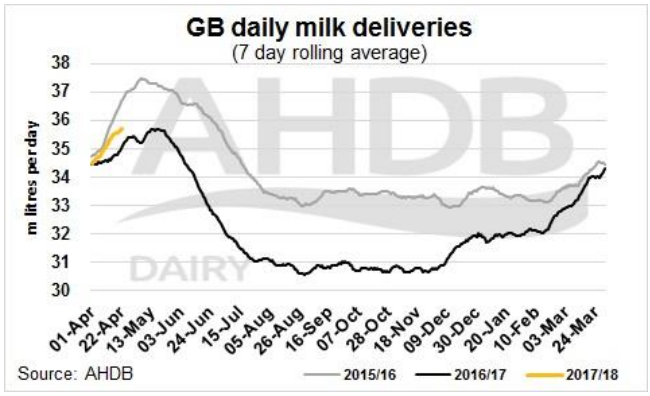
- There were marginal reductions in April for both AMPE and MCVE. Despite a 2% rise in butter, SMP fell by 3% to £1500/t, resulting in a 0.01ppl reduction in AMPE. MCVE fell 0.3ppl from the previous month due to whey powder and mild cheddar decreasing slightly, despite a 2% rise in whey butter.

	April 2017	March 2017	12 months previously	*Net Amount less 2ppl Haulage – APR 17*
AMPE	27.70ppl	27.80ppl	15.50ppl	*25.70ppl*
MCVE	31.80ppl	32.10ppl	15.70ppl	*29.80ppl*

Source: AHDB Dairy

- Skim milk powder prices continue to fall. Despite record levels already in intervention stores, a further 1,200t have been placed in store from Germany, Lithuania and Poland during April. Stocks currently stand at 353,680t and the current market price is very close to intervention level, which is set at €1,698/t. Since March this year a total of 4,565t have been placed into intervention.

UK and EU Milk Deliveries



- UK milk deliveries are continuing to exceed volumes for the week ending 22nd April compared to the same week in 2016/17. The increase is 2.0% which is equivalent to 0.7 million litres per day.

- Over the past four months, milk production in the EU-28 has risen steadily and production levels are similar to this time last year. February's production was only 5.3m litres/day below February 2016 output. The increase in production has mainly come from more output from Italy, Poland, France and the UK. The EU Commission estimates that milk production in 2017 will be 0.6% ahead of last year, with most of the growth occurring in the second half of the year.

- New Zealand has recently suffered two severe storms, which will likely impact on production in the short-term. Exceptionally high soil moisture content is restricting grazing and with higher feed costs, production is expected to drop. However, as only around 9 to 10% of New Zealand's production occurs in April and May, the impact of these storms are expected to be limited and short-lived.

Monthly Price Movements for May 2017

There is little change in milk prices for the month of May, with many buyers standing on their current price.

Commodity Produced	Company/ Contract	Price Change	Standard Litre Price for May 2017
Liquid & Cheese	**Arla Farmers UK**	*No change*	27.03ppl Liquid, 28.13ppl Manufacturing
Liquid & Cheese	**Arla Direct**	*No change*	25ppl Liquid, 25.99ppl Manufacturing
Liquid & Brokered Milk	**First Milk Mainland Scotland**	*-0.25ppl*	25.84ppl
Cheese	**Fresh Milk Company (Lactalis)**	*No change*	28.47ppl. Level profile price 29.05ppl
Liquid & Manufacturing	**Grahams**	*No change*	26.75ppl
Liquid & Manufacturing	**Muller (standard)**	*No change*	26.69ppl
Liquid & Manufacturing	**Muller (Co-op)**	*+0.32ppl*	27.91ppl
Liquid & Manufacturing	**Muller (Tesco)**	*+0.62ppl*	29.37ppl
Liquid, Powder & Brokered	**Yew Tree Dairies**	*No change*	27.5ppl Standard A litre price

- Arla has avoided any price reduction to their UK dairy farmers and confirmed their May price will remain unchanged. Its on-account price for conventional milk was reduced by 1 euro cent/kg (equivalent to 0.76ppl). However, the UKAF board decided to maintain the April price by balancing the May milk price with predicted future benefits from the currency exchange mechanism. As of January 2018, Arla Foods will be moving towards a manufacturing schedule only, where farmers will be paid on constituents.

- First Milk are reducing their May milk price between 0.1ppl and 0.35ppl for May, which reflects a reduction in returns, according to their chairman, Clive Sharpe. Scottish producers will see a 0.25ppl cut, while Haverfordwest and Lake District cheese milk pools reduce by 0.35ppl. The smallest cut of 0.1ppl is for the Midlands and East Wales milk pool. Barber's and Meadow Foods also cutting their May prices by 1.25ppl and 0.4ppl respectively.

- The UK Milk Futures Equivalent (UKMFE) Gross from FCStone/Milkprices.com settled at 27.36ppl for April (0.48ppl lower compared to March, which was 0.63ppl lower than February). This reduced the UKMFE Net to the producer by 0.46ppl to 23.99ppl. Total Net UKMFE was 21.99ppl (after margin/costs are accounted for). UKMFE has now fell five of the last six months, with only January being up on the previous month. However, Futures are now predicting more positivity in prices. With the current strong demand for butter and cream, and as long as Sterling remains relatively stable against the Euro and milk production in the EU does not rapidly increase this summer, it is thought that we have seen the low for commodity prices and that these could steadily pick up going forward (www.milkprices.com).

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Straights Update

Straights prices for delivery in artic loads as of early May are as follows (varies depending on location):

£/T for 29t loads delivery + £7/t haulage	May 17	Jun 17	Jul-Oct 17	Nov 17-Apr 18
Proteins				
Hipro Soya	299	299.50	300	304
Rapeseed Meal	181	184	Jul 184 Aug-Oct 178	189
EU Wheat Distillers	190	188	Jul 188 Aug-Oct 186	186
Starch				
Wheat	154	155	Jul 156 Aug-Oct 142	147
Barley	129	129	Jul 129 Aug-Oct 122	127
Maize	179	179	Jul 179 Aug-Oct 185	Asa178
Fibre				
Sugar Beet Pulp – imported	192	189	Jul 189 Aug-Oct 186	156
Soya Hulls	POA	Asa 138	138	139

Source: Straights Direct on 8th May 2017.
Barley and wheat prices are based on delivery to central belt. For North-East, deduct £5/t for wheat and £10 for Inverness region. Courtesy of Julian Bell, Senior Rural Business Consultant, SAC Consulting.
Prices do not include seller's margin.

Global News

- The Argentine soyabean harvest had been progressing slowly due to adverse weather but drier conditions at the end of April have helped, with 32% harvest now complete. Yields are encouraging, with the north and north-east

region reporting record yields, which should offset the 1 million hectares lost through flooding and drought. The Argentine crop estimate remains unchanged at 56.5MMT. It is predicted that the 2017/18 world soyabean production will be 348MMT, with 38MMT of ending stocks, compared to 345MMT and 40MMT respectively in 2016/17 (International Grains Council). Brazil's harvest is almost complete. US sowing is rapidly underway, with predictions of a record area to be sown.

- Heavy rains in the mid-west US and parts of the corn belt have increased flooding, which has pushed grain markets upwards. Wet weather has also hindered the US maize plantings, being 34% complete as of 30th April, compared to 43% at the same time last year. It is thought that the severe storms have damaged a third of the Kansas wheat crop, with the state's projected acreage being 23% of the total US winter wheat planted area.

- In most of western and northern Europe the last 30 days have seen rainfall typically about half of average levels. The forecast for most of Europe including the southern half of the UK is for above average rainfall in the next fortnight and if it comes then this could be early enough to prevent serious losses.

UK and Scottish News

- In Scotland the northern half has received some snow or an odd shower in the last two weeks while the south of Scotland has generally missed any significant rainfall. Forecasts for the next two weeks see Scotland remaining largely dry and if this happens then more serious crop yield losses may occur.

- Plantings of malting spring barley in Scotland are back slightly, and with the good autumn more winter wheat was put in. This, coupled with a recovering demand for whisky and Scotland moving from a two year surplus into a potential supply deficit, may help ex farm prices. Prices for malting barley have firmed in the last week of April as weather concerns for new crop continue and buyers have taken some cover.

- Most of the feed barley trade is currently farm to farm with the export trade a bit quieter than last year. Feed barley is trading around £122/t ex farm (average) just now with new crop currently looking to be around £117/t ex farm.

- There has been concern about the availability of distillery by-products in Scotland, with barley dark grains no longer available from Glenlossie, wheat distillers from Port Dundas and maize distillers from Invergordon. However, these losses in feed would not exceed 100,000t/year. There is also considerably less moist feed available, about 400,000t less than five years ago. However, product from bioethanol plants in the North or England have more than made up for the shortfall in Scotland, with Vivergo producing 400,000t wheat dark grains and Ensus producing 200-250,000t of similar product, so on a dry matter basis there are more by-products than ever available.

- Compound feeds that contain a lot of soya/protein concentrate feeds may see a drop in price for the summer months (estimated £6 to 7/t depending on supplier) on some products. Complete feeds such as dairy cakes and beef feeds may only see a small reduction (£2 to 3/t) if any at all. Mid protein feeds like wheatfeed and malt culms used by mills are back in price but this is dulled by the slight rise in the dark grain price. It would be worth having a discussion with your feed supplier for confirmation of summer prices and advice on fixing feed prices.

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Invest in the Future with Milk Recording

Sound management decisions must be based on accurate information and this is why herds that milk record are better able to manage change and improve herd performance at a faster rate than those that do not milk record. Not only does recording provide basic performance indicators such as milk yield and composition on a regular basis, it also allows you to track your herd's fertility, disease status (e.g. Johne's, BVD, IBR and Leptospirosis), assess nutritional management and mastitis control through individual cell count data, to name but a few.

Milk recording should not be seen as a cost but as an investment in the future. Sound breeding decisions will allow a faster rate of genetic improvement, ensuring that the best performing cows are mated to the best sires to provide replacements. The worst performing cows can be easily identified and culled. When it comes to selling surplus stock, they will also command a higher price. Major gains in herd performance are not only from genetic improvement but also from better management.

Mastitis is one of the main reasons for culling cows. Milk recording allows you to properly manage cell counts by identifying cows with subclinical mastitis, which contribute to raised bulk tank cell counts. Decisions can be made on how individual cows are managed at drying off and whether they are suitable for selective dry cow therapy. Monitoring individual cow cell counts in early lactation will also give a guide as to how effective your dry cow therapy is. Milk yield is likely to be reduced in cows with high cell counts, due to mastitis causing pathogens damaging milk secreting tissue. Monitoring cell counts enables better selection of cows for breeding to maximise genetic potential for yield, reduce mastitis risk and potentially lower veterinary costs.

Fertility is the main driver of production and profit in the dairy herd. Providing all services and pregnancy diagnosis information are recorded, past and current fertility performance can be reviewed. This provides invaluable information for your veterinarian and/or AI representative to help identify areas for improvement, set targets and benchmark performance.

Regular recording should also be seen as an aid to nutritional management. Urea levels in milk can provide information on whether protein is oversupplied or undersupplied in relation to dietary energy, highlighting if a feed saving can be made or whether rations need reviewing to improve milk production and feeding efficiency. Fat and protein percentages can also indicate the risk of ketosis or acidosis, with a low fat to protein ratio suggesting that acidosis may be an issue, with the opposite ratio (high fat to protein) for ketosis risk. These ratios have the ability to identify possible problem cows before clinical signs are evident, allowing faster recovery and minimising any drop in production.

Performance of heifers in their first lactation can be closely monitored, giving an indication of how well replacements are reared. Low production from first-calf heifers is often due to poor management of youngstock and recording can help identify whether this is an area of weakness.

For larger herds, there is the ability to set up “mini herds” within your herd to suit different breeds or management system (spring calving or autumn calving). The ability to link-up with other software systems such as those for monitoring heat, rumination and lying times, is also available and remote access to your herd’s data is available through the App to tablets and smartphones.

Many milk buyers now require predictions of milk volumes going forward to within 7.5% accuracy and poor forecasting can result in penalties. Milk recording allows you to compare both actual and predicted levels of production across lactations to enable more accurate forecasting. Closer attention can also be paid to milk constituents to better meet the requirements of your milk contract. Milk recording is a powerful management tool: if you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it!

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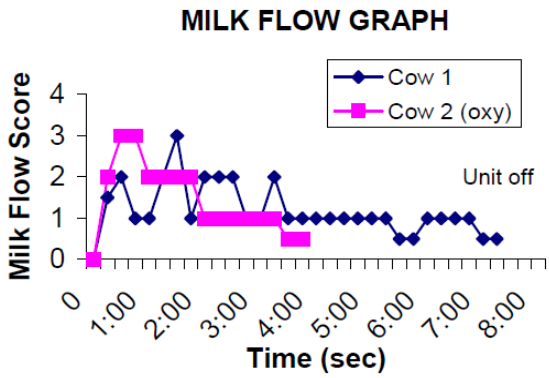
Importance of Timing in Udder Preparation

Efficient harvesting of high quality milk relies upon a consistent routine of udder preparation. Synchronising timing between milk letdown and cluster attachment is the aim to maximise milking efficiency, milk yield and quality.

In the udder, milk is stored either as cisternal milk (milk that is present in the teat end and gland cistern) and alveolar milk (milk that is stored within the udder tissue and makes up over 80% of the total milk stored). The movement of milk between the two fractions is required for continuous milk flow and relies on adequate stimulation of teats for oxytocin release (see following diagram). The oxytocin hormone encourages contraction of muscles to release milk from the alveolar to the cisternal part of the udder for efficient milk letdown.

Milk flow in an unstimulated cow (cow 1) and a properly stimulated cow (cow 2 oxy)



Source: https://ahdc.vet.cornell.edu/programs/NYSCHAP/docs/RecommendedMilkingProcedureFactSheet.pdf

The recommended routine of udder preparation according to the DairyCo Mastitis Control Plan is as follows:

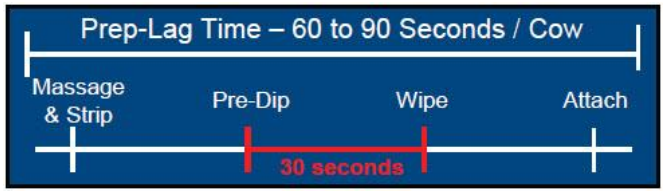
- **Wash** the teats (if necessary), then wipe dry with a clean, dry cloth or towel.
- **Foremilk**, checking for any symptoms of mastitis or irregularities in the milk.
- **Pre-dip** the teats with disinfection product, allowing sufficient time for bacterial kill (at least 30 seconds), then wipe dry with a clean, dry cloth or towel.
- **Attach the cluster unit**, ensuring the clusters are squarely attached and aligned and balanced centrally.

Between 10 to 20 seconds is required for adequate stimulation of the teat skin surface for optimal milk letdown. This can include the first three steps above. Whilst fore-stripping is time consuming, it is one of the best ways to stimulate oxytocin release. As well as identifying cases of clinical mastitis it also removes milk that is higher in somatic cell counts and bacteria, leading to improved milk quality.

Teat ends should be dried thoroughly before cluster attachment. Relying on air drying of teats is not a good substitute for using individual paper towels or cloths. Wet teat ends allow easier access for skin bacteria into the udder and reduced friction between the liner and the teat.

Aim for an interval between 60 to 90 seconds between the start of udder preparation and cluster attachment for optimal milk letdown (known as the prep-lag time), and no more than two minutes. The prep-lag time must coincide with oxytocin release and milk letdown, otherwise there will be a temporary cessation of milk flow (known as bimodal letdown). This can be observed as either a partial or complete stop in milk flow, where cisternal milk is emptied before alveolar milk is letdown. When this happens the claw will appear dry shortly after attachment. Bimodal milk flow increases teat lesions and mastitis risk. If prep-lag time exceeds three minutes, more residual milk and lower yields will result. Overmilking will also be avoided with proper teat stimulation, with less risk of teat end damage.

Suggested timing for pre-milking udder preparation



Source: http://www.milkproduction.com/Library/Scientific-articles/Milking/Key-Messages-for-an-Efficient-Udder-Preparation-Routine/

For very high yielding herds that are milking 3x a day, there is evidence to suggest that these cows do not eject milk as efficiently as those on 2x milking. It is thought that oxytocin release is partly dependent on udder pressure and that udder pressure may affect the sensitivity of cells responsible for milk ejection to oxytocin. Therefore in herds on 3x milking, udder preparation and timing of cluster attachment is even more important.

Handle cows quietly and calmly to minimise stress and fear. Production of adrenaline within 30 minutes of milking can interfere with the milk letdown response, leading to increased unit on-time and incomplete milk out. Cows should enter the parlour readily and generally should not defaecate in the parlour. If cows refuse to enter and often defaecate in the parlour, then milker and parlour performance should be investigated.

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Planning for Quality Silage

There are several critical steps in the silage making process that must be carefully carried out in order to minimise nutrient losses and make the best quality silage possible.

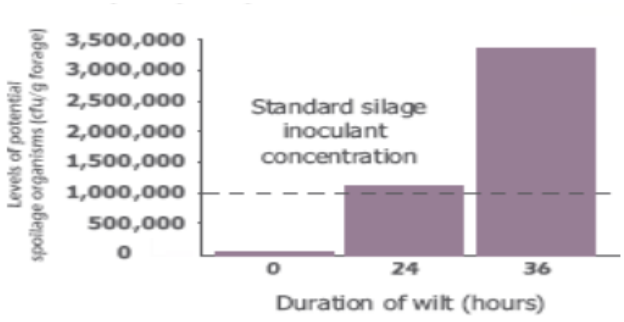
Cutting

- The biggest effect on silage quality is the maturity of grass at cutting. Cutting two weeks late can reduce energy content of silage by 1.5 to 2ME, which equates to over three litres of milk based on a silage dry matter intake of 12kg.
- Cut when no more than 10% of seed heads have emerged. Quality will be maximised when cut around 7 to 10 days after the cows would typically have grazed the crop.
- Leave a residual of 6 to 7cm to encourage good regrowth and minimise soil contamination. Do not be tempted to cut closer to the ground. Soil contains enterobacteria, listeria and clostridia, which lead to poor fermentation and animal health risks.
- Afternoon cutting is preferable when sugars are concentrated in the grass. If cutting in the morning, wait until the dew has lifted. Leave a wide swath behind the mower and go for a rapid wilt.
- Conditioners are better used on stemmy crops to bruise the stem and increase wilting speed by up to 20%. Leafy crops should not need conditioning as water will still be lost through the pores once the crop has been cut.

Wilting

- Aim to wilt within 24 hours for a target dry matter of 30%. A rapid wilt prevents excessive sugar and protein losses.
- The following graph shows the effect of wilting on the number of spoilage organisms in grass. A good quality inoculant will apply 1million bugs/g forage. Once wilting time is 36 hours there are nearly three times as many bugs on the crop and many of these will be undesirable and compete with the lactic acid producing bacteria, leading to poorer fermentation, less stable silage and nutrient losses.

Effect of wilting on levels of spoilage organisms (cfu/g forage)



Source Volac

- Spread the crop as quickly as possible over 100% of the field once cut, to maximise water loss. Two hours after mowing, the pores on the underside of the grass leaves start to close and wilting rates drop by 75%. Generally, 1% of moisture can be lost per hour of sunlight in bright conditions (greater for mower conditioners and tedding).
- In very wet conditions, do not attempt wilting. The longer the grass stays out in the wet, the more nutrient losses there are. Minimise rolling as this will produce more effluent and use a proven inoculant effective at low dry matter or use an acid.

Chop length

- This will depend on the dry matter and there is a range of suggested chop lengths from 1 to 2cm with high dry matter forages (>32%) to reduce ration sorting, to 3 to 4cm being more common. The drier the crop, the shorter the chop length required to get good compaction. With wetter silages a longer chop length should be used (<22%, up to 8cm). It is critical that longer chopped material does not compromise how well the clamp is compacted.

Compaction

- Fill the clamp in layers of 6 to 9 inches and roll continuously as loads are layered in to the clamp. Any thicker than nine inches runs the risk of air pockets forming which will lead to slower fermentation and poorer quality silage, with growth of moulds and yeasts and heating when the clamp is opened.
- Once the clamp is filled, roll for no more than one to two hours as any longer may allow oxygen to be sucked back into the clamp.

- If you can easily push your finger into the silage further than the fingernail or first joint, there is a risk of aerobic instability, especially with higher dry matter silages over 26% and mature longer chopped material.
- If continuing to fill the clamp the next morning, do not roll first. Add another layer, then roll to avoid squeezing out carbon dioxide produced by the fermentation and replacing with oxygen, which results in a slower, poorer fermentation and increased nutrient losses.
- Aim for no more than a 30 degree slope on the ramp and shoulders.

Sealing

- Use plastic sheeting on the sides with a 2m overlap with the top sheet to reduce waste at the shoulders. Use last years cover for sheeting sides and a new one on top.
- Oxygen barrier film products effectively seal the top of the pit by clinging to the silage for optimal fermentation conditions, keeping oxygen out and reducing waste. Use underneath your normal plastic sheet. Black plastic is porous and can let in two litres of oxygen per m^2/day.
- With very high dry matter silage, direct cut some fresh grass and layer on top to seal. Alternatively use salt as a preservative to reduce waste at a rate of 3kg/m^2 on top and up to 6kg/m^2 at shoulders.
- If filling the clamp the following morning, sheet the clamp overnight. Clamps left unsheeted overnight can have up to 5% dry matter loses.
- Ensure sufficient weight on top of the sheet with touching tyres, gravel bags around clamp edges and seems of sheets or use bales of straw (ideal for indoor pits).

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What's Happening at Crichton?

It's been a busy time at Crichton Royal Farm recently. Forage maize was drilled on 19th April under plastic with two single-cob varieties Emerson and Lovely. Once first cut silage has been completed, a two cob variety Marco will also be sown, bringing the total acres of maize up to 75. The target maize silage quality is 30% dry matter and 30% starch. It will be interesting to see how these different varieties perform in terms of yield and the forage quality they produce.

Last year three cuts of silage were made for the Crichton and Acrehead dairy units. However, this year the policy is to maximise silage quality and increase milk from forage by aiming for five cuts, with silage being made every five weeks. First cut silage is already underway, with 147 acres having been cut on the 27th April, yielding 5t/acre at 37% dry matter. The second batch of 200 acres is underway today (4th May) in favourable conditions. The target is to produce silage consistently over the season at a minimum 11.5ME and around 15 to 16% crude protein.

Both dairy units have rapidly progressed with selective dry cow therapy since starting on November 2015 with Acrehead and April 2016 at Crichton, and are well above the compulsory 10% that Arla now demands. Currently 65% of cows at Crichton are dried off without antibiotics and 50% of cows at Acrehead. This practice is working well without any detrimental effect or increase in mastitis cases in the first month of lactation and both herds are consistently running at cell counts averaging 125.

Acrehead has just started 3x/day milking as of 15th April. Milk yield has increased by 10%, which is not as much as hoped for when moving from a 2x to 3x/day system. However, cows were previously being milked 12 hours apart, which is not that common in a 2x system. Initial observations are that cows are keener to come into the parlour, are less fidgety towards the end of their milking and there is better cow flow.

Over the last five years the Langhill herd at Crichton has been managed on either a 100% home-grown ration or a complete by-product ration. Latterly, the by-product ration herd was struggling to produce milk that was saleable due to very poor butterfat levels (average 3.1%), the result being almost a 3ppl difference in the milk price for milk sold from Crichton, compared to

Acrehead. These systems going forward for the next five years are changing to look at the effect on the two genetic selection lines of a high concentrate (4.5T/cow/lactation) compared to a low concentrate ration (1.5T/cow/lactation).

Find out next month what's happening at Barony College Dairy Unit.

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US EXPERT OFFERS ADVICE ON PREVENTING DIPS IN MILK FAT AT TOTALDAIRY

Farmers looking to prevent unwelcome dips in milk butterfat can hear the latest practical, research-driven advice at this year's Total Dairy Seminar in Staffordshire on 14th & 15th June.

North Devon-born farmer's son, Professor Adam Lock from Michigan State University will be using a number of lectures and small group workshops at the event to explain how and why dips in milk fat occur and how they can be overcome.

Professor Adam Lock, Assistant Professor,
Department of Animal Science, Michigan State University

"I will give farmers some ideas on how to avoid a low milk fat situation and how to maximise milk fat by looking at the diet. But it's not just about the diet, it's also about how you manage the cow and the environment, such as stocking rates, the number of times cows are fed, and whether the ration is being over processed in the mixer wagon," explains Prof Lock.

How farmers can benchmark herd milk fats - whilst factoring in seasonality - will also be discussed in a dedicated workshop on "The influence of diet and management on milk fat (including the effect of grazing)".

As usual, delegates will be able to choose which seminars or workshops they would like to attend, depending on their area of interest, with dedicated sessions for farmers and advisors. A number of expert speakers from around the world will be at the event, which will focus on three key themes; nutrition, fertility, and youngstock.

Prof Lock will be joined by some other leading ruminant nutrition experts including Michael Ballou of Texas Tech University and independent consultant Ric Grummer from the US who will cover various nutritional topics, including transition cow management.

Prof Lock will also be covering the role of dietary fat supplements in improving the yield of milk and milk components (including milk fat) and highlight the importance of feeding the right type of fatty acids to achieve desired results.

He adds: "We're starting to understand that different fatty acids have a different biological effect on the cow. So we need to think about the different fatty acids that fat supplements are providing and the different effects these may have on milk production and body weight."

Prof Lock will be highlighting research findings from a new study which looked at the effects of feeding different amounts of fatty acids on milk constituents. For example, feeding palmitic acid (C16:0) helps drive milk fat and improves fibre digestion. Some other protected fat products also include oleic acid, which help milk yield and body condition.

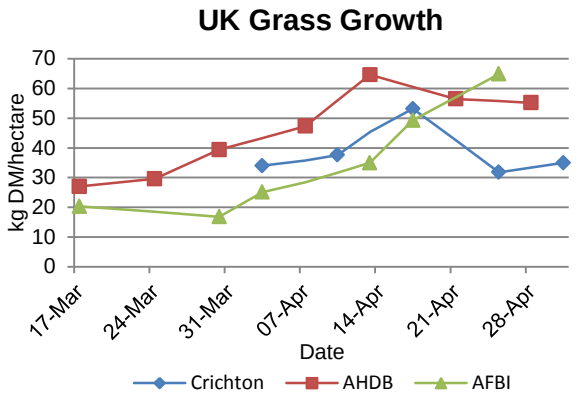
He'll also be presenting a lecture on "The influence of milk fat and diet on energy partitioning and body weight" to discuss the implications of low milk fat on body weight and future cow performance.

A further seminar on the impact of milk fat on human health will also challenge some misconceptions around dairy and highlight the positive implications of milk on human health.
To find out more and book your place, visit www.totaldairy.com or follow @TotalDairy on Twitter.

Aly Balsom, EBVC

Grass Growth

Grass growth across the country (from AHDB Forage for Knowledge farms and at Crichton) has slowed over the last two weeks due to the colder weather although growth rates are still slightly ahead of the same time last year. However, data from 12 dairy farms in Northern Ireland (supplied by AFBI) have risen steadily throughout the month of April.



According to Agriland (Ireland), grass growth in Scotland as of 1st May averaged 58kgDM/hectare. Highest production was recording in the north-east of England at 80kgDM/hectare and the lowest growth was in the east of England (including East Anglia) at only 28kgDM/hectare, reflecting very dry weather conditions. Forecast for early May is for temperatures to warm up, which will help drive growth rates.

The goal during the first grazing round is to have sufficient grass to last the herd until "magic day". This is when there is more grass grown on the farm than is required by the cows and paddocks can be shut off for silage.

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Dates for your Diary

- 9th-10th May – **Cattle Foot Trimming Course.** SRUC Barony Campus, Parkgate, Dumfries, DG1 3NE. Contact Training Team: 01387 242918 or kyra.redpath@sruc.ac.uk

- 16th May – **Calf to Calving – What Does your Calf House Tell Us?** Glasgoforest, Kinellar, Aberdeenshire, AB21 0SH. Time 10.45. To book your place contact Sharon Lauder t: 07876 706391 sharon.lauder@ahdb.org.uk

- 17th May – **Calf to Calving – Minimising Stress to Maximise Return.** Nethercraig Farm, Eaglesham, Glasgow G76 0PF. Time: 10.45. To book your place contact Sharon Lauder t: 07876 706391 sharon.lauder@ahdb.org.uk

- 17th May – **Border and Lakeland Holstein Club Monthly Show and Sale**. Borderway Mart, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 2RS.

- 18th May – **Controlling Leatherjackets**. Whithorn, Dumfries and Galloway. Time 14.00-16.30. To register for event contact Jane on 0131 666 2474, or email jdingwall@soilassociation.org

- 22nd May - **Embryonics DIY AI Training Course**. North Scotland. For more information contact the Scottish Dairy Hub on 03454 755110. Event organiser: Embryonics t: 01606 854411 embryonics@embryonicsltd.co.uk

- 24th May – **Open Evening SRUC Aberdeen Campus**. SRUC Aberdeen Campus, Ferguson Building, Craibstone Estate, Aberdeen, AB21 9YA. Time 16.00-20.00.

- 24th-25th May – **Grassland and Muck**. Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG.

- 14th-15th June – **Cereals Event**. Boothby Graffoe, Lincolnshire.

- 14th-15th June - **Total Dairy Seminar 2017**. Keele University, Staffordshire. Event organiser: Total Dairy t: 01768 877094 info@totaldairy.com

- 14th-16th June – **ICAR Conference 2017**, Edinburgh International Conference Centre, Edinburgh, EH3 8EE.

- 22nd-25th June – **Royal Highland Show**, Ingliston, Edinburgh, EH28 8NB.

For any further enquiries regarding the information in this newsletter please contact:

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