

Notes on Short Term Feeding Dairy & Beef Cattle

10th April 2013

1. Target a rotation length of 25 days for the second rotation, grazing 1/25 of available grazing area per day e.g. 50 ha available, allocate 2 ha per day. This can be changed as grass growth improves.
2. Delay the closing of silage ground, especially where this area can be grazed by stock.
3. With pre-grazing covers of 400-600 kg DM / ha at the beginning of second round, allocation per LU per day will be driven by stocking rate. At high stocking rate (3 LU/ha), assume grass allocation of 5-8 kg DM / LU for pre-grazing covers of 400-600 kg DM. At low stocking rate (2 LU), assume grass allocation of 8-12 kg DM / LU for pre-grazing covers of 400- 600 kg DM.

Target Dry Matter Intake

Dairy Cow	16-17 kg DM
Lactating suckler cow	12-13 kg DM
Young cattle 350 kg LW	7-8 kg DM
Stores 450 kg LW	8-9 kg DM

The deficit in grass supply needs to be filled with a combination of silage, straw and meals, depending on availability. See sample diets below

4. Prioritise grass for milking cows, suckler cows with calves and stock for finishing off grass this summer.
 - a. Get suckler cows out to grass this will help reduce disease pressure, keep condition on cows & keep calving pattern right for next year
5. Get fertiliser N out
 - a. On dairy farms apply 70 units by the 1st April & 100 units by the 1st May
 - b. Apply 45-50 units on cattle farm
 - c. Silage stocks are depleted and need to be replaced – additional fertiliser will be needed
6. Animals that can be put on straw + meals
 - a. Dry cows - straw + 3-4 kg meals
 - b. Young stock - straw + 3-4 kg meals
 - c. Replacement heifers on straw + 4 kg meals
 - d. Calves – 2-3 kg meals
7. Replacement heifers should not be neglected – feed ad lib silage + 2-3 kg meals. If replacement heifers are on limited grass feed 1-2 kg meals.

Every 1 kg ration will replace 1 kg DM of grass or 6-7 kg fresh of grass silage

Dairy Cow Diet

1. Some grass, silage & straw

Grass	6-7 kg DM
Ration	7 kg fresh
Soya hulls / palm kernel	3 kg fresh
Straw (chopped)	2-3 kg fresh

2. In situations where there is no grass and only limited supply of grass silage and straw, the meal input is very high. Consult a nutritionist before embarking on such a diet. **There is a significant health warning with this diet - big risk of digestive upsets if not managed correctly.**

Things to check to make sure that animals are getting enough fibre

1. Chewing the cud - Number of chews per regurgitated cud bolus – target is 70
2. Milk fat dropping
3. Loose dungs
4. Displaced abomasums
5. Minimum 21% NDF from forage
6. If feeding very high levels need to be diet feeding or feeding 4 times a day

Suckler Cows Diet (lactating, moderate size, moderate milk yield, in relatively good BCS)

1. No Silage, some grass & straw

Grazed grass	4-5 kg DM
Ration	3-3.5 kg fresh
Straw (chopped)	2-3 kg fresh

2. No grass, some silage & straw – significant health warning with this diet

Grass silage	15-18 kg fresh
Straw (chopped)	2.5-3.0 kg fresh
Ration	5-5.5 kg fresh

*If in poor condition, feed an additional 1-1.5 kg meals

Young Stock (350-450 kg)

1. No Silage, some grass

Grazed grass	4 kg DM
Ration	2-3 kg fresh

2. No grass, some silage & straw – significant health warning with this diet

Grass silage	10-15 kg fresh
Ration	3.5-4 kg fresh