

Edition 2

Maximise Youngstock Potential Attention to detail for quality calves

Ū

in

y

NBDC Beef Classification Integrated Beef Opportunities



# Maximise youngstock potential by starting on the right foot

#### By Elysha Chell, NWF Youngstock Specialist

Whether rearing beef calves in a suckler herd situation or artificially rearing them from the dairy sector, attention to detail and ensuring calves get the best start is fundamental to lifetime performance.

#### Sourcing calves:

When sourcing calves, it is key to know the health status of the herd of where they are coming from. This is not only important to calf health, but it heightens the risk of bringing diseases onto the farm, which can be of particular concern if you already have other livestock on the holding.

If at market or farm sale, inspection of the calves is important alongside knowing the health status of where they are from. Calves should be of good weight for their age (over 7 days old), have a dry navel and should be bright and bold; not showing any signs of ill-health.

#### Giving calves the best start:

Whether calves are for replacement heifers or for beef, colostrum intake is fundamental

to ensuring those calves have that passive immunity needed to thrive! This also applies to suckled calves; ensure they are up and sucking the dams as soon as possible! Any calves that have had difficult calving's require extra care and attention.

The preweaning phase and colostrum has a massive impact on finished beef as the time taken to get them finished all starts from this period. Research has shown that calves which have received 4L of colostrum, compared to the traditional 2L, have significantly greater growth rates (Faber et al., 2005).

For most beef enterprises, daily liveweight gain (DLWG) is a key performance indicator, so sourcing calves with good colostrum management is fundamental to business performance.

This also applies to milk replacer, this phase is the most efficient period in a calf's life and where their feed to growth conversion is at their highest, so feeding a higher plane of nutrition pre weaning can result in a higher weaned weights and DLWG!



It is important for any business to know that there is a market for their product. For those only wanting to rear, are there units which they can then move onto? Is there a target weight they need to be? For those who are wanting to take calves all the way through, is the demand there? Speaking to local livestock auctioneers, meat processors and livestock marketing groups will help identify the markets and specifications.

#### The environment and feeding:

Like with rearing replacement heifers, the 5Cs; colostrum, comfort, calories, cleanliness and consistency apply and are important for calf health and productivity.

Colostrum	Comfort	Calories	Cleanliness	Consistency
When sourcing calves, discuss herd health and colostrum intakes. Calves should receive sufficient quantity and quality, in a timely manner. Following the 4 Q's of colostrum management is encouraged.	Calves spend a significant time lying down (17-19 hours), therefore clean, dry bedding is important. Ensure there is enough space and ventilation. Drafts and crowded pens will have negative impacts.	Healthy calves can drink 4 litres per feeding. Provide a quality milk replacer high in dairy protein and digestible ingredients.	Calves destined for beef are often exposed to transport, a stress factor, which increases their susceptibility to disease. Provide clean fresh pens, and water daily to encourage intakes.	This means consistent feeding, the makeup of the feed; ensuring the inclusion rate is correct and the same every feeding. Consistent temperature and timing of feeds also promote calf health and performance.





**Feed Curve** 

8 Week (Days)	Day 14-20	Day 21-27	Day 28-34	Day 35-41	Day 42-48	Day 49-55
Litres/ day	6	6	6	4	2	1
Compound/day	200g	500g	900g	1.4kg	1.9kg	2.4kg

10 Week (Days)	Day 14-20	Day 21-27	Day 28-34	Day 35-41	Day 42-48	Day 49-55	Day 56-62	Day 63-69
Litres/ day	6	6	6	5	5	3	2	1
Compound/ day	200g	500g	800g	1.4kg	1.3kg	1.75g	2.25kg	2.5kg

#### Costs

The table shows estimated costs for 8 and 10 weeks weaning. These do not take into consideration the 1st 14 days of life. The concentration of calf milk replacer is at 150g/litre. In this example, NWF Ultramilk Blue is used. Water has been calculated at 850ml/litre and for every 1kg of compound, 4 litres of water are drank. Fresh water should always be available to calves.

10 Week (Days) 8 Week		10 Week				
Capital						
Average cost of bull calf*	£218.80	£218.80				
Inputs						
Milk replacer	£43.84 (26.25kg @ £1670/T)	£59.62 (35.7kg @ £1670/T)				
Compound	£15.86 (51kg@ £311/T)	£23.64 (76kg @ £311/T)				
Vet Meds	£24.00	£24.00				
Bedding (straw)	£9.00	£12.00				
Utilities						
Electricity	£2.20	£2.80				
Water	£4.90	£5.23				
Misc	£5	f8				
Mortality	3%	3%				
Total variable cost per calf	£108	£139				

Average market prices for 6–12-month stores range from £500/head to £1150/head\* \*Farmers Guardian average 04.06.21, breed of calf has a massive influence on price. Some continentals are

fetching £441.70/calf where some black & whites are fetching £46.20/calf. Prices correct at time of print.



## Attention to detail for quality contract reared calves



By Beth Howells, NWF Technical Development Co-Ordinator

Contract calf rearing is proving a successful addition for a Herefordshire based family farming business that was looking to add a new enterprise. Having good attention to detail is key to any calf rearing system, especially when rearing over 650 beef cross calves a year.

Imi Manning, from Loxhill Farm near Ledbury is achieving consistently high growth rates, rearing calves on contract for Meadow Quality. After graduating from Harper Adams and returning to the family farm in 2018, the family decided contract calf rearing would best suit the available infrastructure and building space.

Meadow Quality have 16 calf rearing units across the country, producing around 10,000 reared calves per year. Simon Fryar from Meadow Quality explains that *"working closely with our rearers, helps to ensure they can*  utilise their skills and facilities to produce high quality calves, enabling the rearer to focus on managing the calves on farm. We take care of sourcing and the onward journey for the calf, delivering a regular income to the rearer."

Under the contract with Meadow Quality, Loxhill farm provide rearing space for calves which come onto the unit from collection centres at around four weeks old weighing 55-65kg. They are then reared until they weigh 130-150kg, usually remaining on the unit for around 85 days.

#### Attention to detail for quality contract reared calves. Continued...

Meadow Quality are keen benchmark users, applying days in rear versus daily liveweight gain to monitor performance and promote better health and welfare, along with optimum unit profitability. The shared aim is to shorten days in rear, whilst optimising animal health allowing for a fit, well-developed calf.

Loxhill Farm have recently invested in eight large igloo and veranda rearing units, each capable of holding 15 calves. Arriving in batches of 15, the farm welcomes on average 66 calves every month. The igloos have automatic refillable water troughs, concentrate feeders and straw racks.

As a batch of calves can come from several dairy farms, Meadow Quality operates a comprehensive health plan, devised and managed by vets. Once calves arrive on farm, Imi works closely with their vets to ensure high health status is maintained. Pre-weaned calves are housed in igloos, while post-weaned and vaccinated calves are moved into dry weaned yards for around six weeks. After each batch, the igloos are mucked out, pressure washed and disinfected with a one-week break before the next batch is brought in. "Great care is taken to maintain a healthy environment to allow calves to grow to their potential," says Imi.

Pre-weaned calves are machine fed NWF UltraLife Whey milk replacer, a 24% protein and 20% oil, Lifestart approved product. The Trouw Nutrition Lifestart Programme is based on extensive, scientific studies, and conclusively found that increased growth pre-weaning leads to greater productivity.

"For the first 15 days, calves are fed eight litres per day split across four feeds with 140 minutes between, which can help prevent gorging. From day 16 to 22, they get six litres in four feeds, and from day 23 to 31, a stepdown weaning system is implemented, the volume is dropped by 0.6 litres/day with calves weaned in day 31," explains Beth Howells, NWF Technical Development Co-Ordinator. Calves have access to NWF Super Rearer compound as soon as they arrive on farm and by day 16 are typically consuming 2kg/day. When fully weaned, intakes are 3-4kg. Intakes are closely monitored, ensuring sufficient intakes, to reduce any risk of a growth check post weaning. Since the igloos were installed, 373 calves have been reared and the results are impressive (see table below). Pre-weaned calves have grown consistently at over 0.8kg/day and over the time on the unit have exceeded 1kg/day liveweight gain across a range of breeds.

Breed	Herefords	Continentals	Angus
Number of calves	150	142	81
Weaning FCR (kgDM/kgLWG)	2.19	2.1	1.96
Overall FCR (kgDM/kgLWG)	3.73	2.44	2.97
Weaning weight (kg)	103.9	97.1	102
Weaning DLWG (kg/day)	0.81	0.81	0.89
Overall DLWG (kg/day)	1.03	1.02	1.06

For further information on contract calf rearing with Meadow Quality visit www.meadowq.co.uk or call 01789 734 100.









## **NWF Beef Feed Range**

NWF Agriculture supplies a comprehensive range of beef compounds and blends designed to suit all farming systems. Manufactured using only high-quality raw materials, the beef feed range promotes optimal health, growth, performance, and fertility. UFAS approved production sites are located in Cheshire, Cumbria, Lancashire and Devon with feeds delivered direct to farm or available for collection.



#### COMPOUNDS

NWF Calf Pellets	A high-quality starter pellet which is suitable from birth until weaning. Calf Pellets contains NWF Progress Plus, a comprehensive mineral and additive package.
NWF Super Rearer Nuts	A specialist rearer diet to maintain a high growth rate post weaning. The diet will compliment a straw or silage- based diet. Available in a 18% or 16%.
NWF Vital Rearer Nuts	A cost-effective rearing nut to compliment a straw or silage-based diet. Available in a variety of protein percentages.
Super Grower	A balanced 15% protein diet suitable for both growing and finishing, especially in early maturing breeds where a higher protein and slightly lower starch is needed for finishing. *Available from all sites (with yeast at WM and LT).
Pedigree Beef	An intensive beef finisher diet, high in barley that helps promote growth.*Available from WM and LT
Intensive Beef	An intensive beef finisher diet, high in barley that helps promote growth. Intensive Beef is available with and without yeast. *Available from WI
Goldstar Beef Plus	A 14% protein, high energy maize based finisher diet containing yeast.*Available from WI
Beef Concentrate	A urea-based concentrate designed to be mixed with cereal on farm at 3:1 or 4:1 to meet the desired protein for animals over 3 months of age. Contains triple minerals and yeast.

#### **BLENDS**

Cattle Rearer 16% and 18% Protein	Available as an 16% and 18% protein blend, Cattle rearer is an ideal first dry feed for youngstock. It contains an excellent balance of top-quality cereal, protein and fibre sources along with a high specification mineral and vitamin package to meet the needs of growing cattle.
Beef Grower B2	A 15% protein, cereal based blend, aimed at feeding semi-intensive beef systems where grass silage is the main forage source. This blend includes a range of high- quality raw materials including NWF Ultra Pro R (rumen protected rape meal) to ensure strong growth rates.
Beef Finisher B1	A high starch beef finisher diet aimed at intensive beef finisher units. Beef Finisher B1 blend includes high levels of rolled barley, wheat and maize to promote lean meat development and achieve excellent daily liveweight gains where rapid finishing is required. This blend can be fed ad-lib but should be fed alongside good clean straw with fresh water to achieve maximum growth rates.
Amino Mix 34	A high protein blend concentrate designed to be mixed with processed cereal grain to create a balanced grower or finisher diet. Contains high quality protein sources including Hi Pro Soya meal and NWF Ultra Pro R (rumen protected rape meal) to ensure the protein requirements of all cattle are met.

In addition to the standard blends, the NWF FAR registered sales specialists work in partnership with the blends team to formulate bespoke blends to best suit your beef production system and budget.

WM – Wardle Mill | LT – Longtown Mill | WI – Wixland Mill

### **NBDC Beef Classification**

Type classification was initially set up in the UK over 50 years ago to identify strengths and weakness in the conformation of dairy cows. The National Bovine Data Centre (NBDC) employs a team of 14 classifiers that score cows of 25 different pedigree breeds, both beef and dairy, across the UK.

Meurig James, Head of NBDC, outlines how the scheme works in beef cattle and provides advice on how breeders can make the best use of classification scores.

Beef shorthorns were the first UK beef breed to adopt classification, 6 years ago. They were closely followed by other major pedigree beef societies, including the British Simmentals, South Devons and Welsh blacks. **Body Conformation** makes up 25% of the final score. It considers Stature, Chest Width, Body Depth, Length, Rump Angle and Rump Width.

**Beef Character** which takes into account breed character and muscling and makes up 25% of the final score.

**Legs & Feet** is the most important category and has a weighting of 30% of the final score. Locomotion, Rear Leg Set, Foot Angle are the key traits taken into account here.

**Mammary** has a weighting of 20% of the final score and focuses on teat length, Udder Depth and Fore Udder Attachment.



Meurig advises that the 4 boxes are only scored in the high eighties or over ninety if the individual linear traits are close to ideal.

One of the many benefits of classification is when buying a stock bull at a society sale. This is a particularly important task for beef breeders, and they can use the classification of the maternal line (dam, grandam etc) to guide their choice of bull. Meurig personally believes that the cow family needs to be at least in the high VG's which means the high eighties and if possible, into EX which is over 90. If you have a problem with for example legs and feet in your herd, then you should be choosing sires from a cow family that score well over 90 in that box, to be able to improve the herd.

Some of the other benefits from classification include

identifying the best females in herds to breed replacements and of course cows that are scored the highest often make high prices if they go on to be sold.

**NBDC** 

For information on the NBDC beef classification scheme visit **www.nbdc.uk** 

# **Maximise Mineral Uptake**

UltraMin mineral range from NWF Agriculture for your beef herd

### **UltraMin Powdered Minerals**

Supplied in 25kg bags

• Elite Dry Cow

• Dry Cow

- / Cattle Hi Mag
  - NWF Youngstock
- Intensive Beef
  Bespoke minerals
- Suckler Cow also available

## **Mineral Buckets**

Supplied in in 20kg or 80kg buckets

- Dry Cow
- High Mag
- Cattle Breeder
  Protein Energy
- Cattle General
  Purpose



**AGRICULTUR** 

MINERAL

SUPPLEMENT

Net weight

25kge



# Supplement for Success with NWF

As sustainability becomes a key future objective for beef enterprises, it is important to focus on increasing animal efficiency though maximising daily liveweight gain. Reducing that time on farm whilst ensuring health and welfare is key. NWF Agriculture provide a range of products, such as feed additives and minerals that can help achieve and improve this objective.

#### Yea-Sacc®

Consistent results from extensive research have highlighted that an inclusion of a live yeast (Yea-Sacc®) can increase average daily gain and increase killing out percentage, both of which are driven by increased feed efficiency reducing the number of days taken to reach slaughter!

#### **Opti-Rumen**

Recent research has indicated that supplementation of Opti-Rumen, a specialised blend of essential oils and spices, can help reduce emissions though healthier, more efficient cattle and through reduced enteric fermentation (produces methane).

#### Table 1: Enteric Methane (in vitro study with Opti-Rumen)

	Control	Opti-Rumen	SE	Р
CH4 mM/L	67.8	61.29	0.37	P<0.001

(Source: Phode Labs)

#### Acid Buf

Acid Buf is an efficient and effective rumen buffer derived from calcareous marine algae and is 100% natural.

Intensively reared beef cattle are typically fed diets which consist of highly fermentable starch. The sudden transition from higher forage diets impacts rumen function, resulting in excess lactic acid production causing an undesirable change in the rumen environment which leads to acidosis. This will impact nutrient utilisation from feedstuffs and can lead to reduced productivity and performance, impacting negatively on margin over feed costs.

Acid Buf inclusions in beef diets can increase average daily gain (ADG) and improve feed conversion ratio (FCR) which can result in extra profit per animal. A study conducted on 126 Charolais finishing beef cattle (2016) saw a significant gain when using Acid Buf compared to sodium bicarbonate, a 5.4% improvement in FCR.

## *Farm Case Study:* Dave Meakin and Family, Grange Farm

Grange Farm is home to a commercial beef herd, arable enterprise and an expanding Dexter suckler cow herd, providing an outlet for a diversification into meat boxes. The Meakin family have highlighted some key areas within their commercial beef unit which is helping to reduce age of slaughter and time on farm.

The suckler herd has doubled in just three years and is calving all year round to meet the demand for meat boxes sold under the brand Freeby Grange Dexters. The Dexter breed provides a niche quality, tender meat, and with the animals being smaller than typical commercial breeds less customers are needed to sell a whole carcass. Mr Meakin believes this not only maintains the demand of regular customers, it also makes the process more manageable from a farm side point of view, "we have a couple of animals ready every month". The commercial beef enterprise facilitates 85 (and expanding) dairy cross animals. Mr Meakin says "we source from two local farms, not only because of ease due to proximity but they use good bulls on their cows". Using predominantly British Blue x dairy, calves are brought to the farm at around 2 weeks old. Calves are fed on milk replacer until they are 8 weeks old, with a peak milk feed rate of 6 litres per day, split between 2 feeds.

Calves have a step-down weaning process, which encourages rumen development and helps the transition onto solid feed, limiting the risk of a growth check. "We have recently tweaked a few things with the calves, changing from a whey replacer to the NWF 50% skim Ultramilk Yellow and NWF Calf Pellets." Mr Meakin goes to explain that "by investing and spending time in the preweaning phase it ultimately sets them up to becoming productive beef animals".



### *Farm Case Study:* **Dave Meakin and Family, Grange Farm** (Continued)

It is important for any beef unit rearing calves to have an emphasis on the first 8 weeks of life. This period has the highest feed conversion efficiency; getting growth now can help compensatory growth further down the line or even decrease that time taken to finishing.

250 acres of the farm is used for arable, with forage seeds, meadow hay and cereal crops being grown. Once weaned, the youngstock are transitioned onto a growing ration consisting of home-grown barley and oats alongside bought in sugar beet shreds and NWF's Beef Concentrate. Cattle are weighed around 9-10 months, which helps identify animals ready to be transitioned onto a finisher ration, with the target of 615kg. For the finisher ration, oats and NWF Beef Concentrate levels are reduced, and barley increased. *"We have started adding Yea-Sacc® into the ration which has seen significant positive impacts. Cattle are finishing 2-3 week earlier with this supplementation".* The cost savings of 2-3 weeks is significant and can allow for higher turnover of cattle which is a key target for Grange Farm. The commercials are currently achieving 1.5-

1.7kg daily liveweight gain (DLWG) and are sent to the abattoir at around 12-14 months,



this is something the family are wanting to improve further with the aim to get their DLWG to 2kg a day. "This will help shorten finishing further and therefore save that additional housing and time on farm costs" says Mr Meakin. The average finishing time is 30-40 days, where before these tweaks animals were finished at 14, 16 months old. As cattle are sold deadweight, reports are given after each batch where they are consistently achieving the desired

1. The 15-point grid highlights in a traffic light system which conformation and fat classes are desired; green being highly desirable. Grange Farm are consistency producing highly desired carcass specifications of Rs and Us (with the occasional O). Dead weights of 360-380kg are already being achieved, however, Dave hinted at further improvements already in his sights "we are wanting to achieve 400kg, but not there just yet".

conformation and fat classes shown in figure





Figure 1: The Meakins commercial beef are consistently achieving the desired conformation and fat classes.

So, what does the future hold for Grange farm? "The aim is to have 100 commercial beef animals a year, working on increasing their DLWG, shortening the finishing period whilst edging the deadweight closer to 400kg. We want things to remain manageable as a family business, we are happy with the demand for our dexter meat boxes, they complement the commercial beef and arable enterprise well", concludes David.

NWF Agriculture thank the Meakin family for providing an insight into their business, it is clear from conversations the family have welfare and efficiency at the forefront of their expanding enterprise with exciting progress over the coming years.

## Meadow Quality Integrated Beef Opportunities

Truly exceptional circumstances are being seen in 2021 for the UK Beef Industry, with the £4/Kg barrier being briefly broken in April and stimulating a sustained period of strong stock prices for all ages and classifications. Despite this, the vulnerability from commercial price swings should remain a focus to all beef producers.

Carcase values, 12 months ago, were returning between £90-£120/head less to the beef finisher in an extremely volatile climate. Even these prices looked favourable against the backdrop of 2019.

Now, with foodservice recovering, post-Brexit trade deals, and emerging meat consumption trends all altering the long-term outlook for UK beef is indicating that it may be a sensible time to explore opportunities to protect your margins from future market disruption.

#### **Integrated Beef Contracts with Meadow Quality**

Meadow Quality's integrated beef contract options have been developed to provide a consistent supply of high welfare finished beef to the processor. In return, farmers across the supply chain are rewarded using a transparent fee system which is contractually fixed and secured against exposure to commercial fluctuations, including slaughterhouse deductions and trimming losses.

As an independent farmer-owned business, Meadow Quality is expanding current operations and looking to engage with more finishing units, to create long-term partnerships and underwrite their beef enterprise.



#### The cycle has been kept simple:

A twice-selected contract reared calf arrives on the finishing unit, vaccinated, disbudded, BVD screened and castrated at 4-5 months of age. The reared calf then remains on farm until finished. The finisher is renumerated by an agreed and transparent "finisher fee" which rewards for growth performance on farm.

#### Flexibility

The scheme has been designed to afford total flexibility to the beef finisher, ensuring the production system compliments the rest of the farm. This extends from group size to delivery times, breed and sex. There are two variations of the scheme available:

- The Intensive Model aimed at finishing dairy steers and continentals, where stock are housed all-year-round. This model encourages holdings to convert to "AFU" status, which, after some initial farm infrastructure alterations, will remove the worries of TB testing and shutdowns.
- **The Semi-Intensive Model** aimed at units looking to unlock the value of grazing on farm. Progressive grazers will extract a majority of the liveweight gain from leys, providing an alternative use for productive grassland and exposing the many benefits of introducing livestock to an arable rotation.

#### Security

Entering an Integrated Supply Chain, which guarantees a fixed level of return, allows a finishing unit to allocate their own costings and to safeguard business margins. With careful planning, finishing units can create a stable and reliable monthly income from their beef enterprise, within a 10–15-month cycle. For new entrants or farms looking to secure additional investment, the beef contract can also provide excellent supporting evidence for finance providers.

#### **Future-proofing**

Meadow Quality is dedicated to promoting greater efficiencies across the UK Beef Industry. From encouraging dairy farmers to use specially selected beef semen which drive superior growth and carcase traits, to a range of projects including feed intake monitoring and the environmental impacts of producing beef to the consumer.

If you would like to learn more about the Meadow Quality integrated beef contracts, please call the team on 01789 734100 or email info@meadowq.co.uk

### **MEADOW QUALITY**

Livestock Trading since 1975



# **Grazing Management for Beef Cattle**

By Roger Bacon, Barenbrug Regional Manager



Spring growth was delayed by roughly a month, with prolonged dry cold frosty weather causing havoc with grass growth. However, the rainfall during May followed by higher temperatures of June brought some much-needed heat during the day and ideal growing conditions, grass crops played catchup and grew rapidly in about 10-14 days.

Well managed grass can improve stock performance and farm efficiency. Starting with an early turnout in the spring has many benefits including reduced labour hours, more contented stock and cheaper liveweight gain. Economically, more expensive feeds can be displaced by grass and an early turnout of stock will increase the quality of grass in subsequent rotations.

#### When to graze?

In an ideal world, grass is grazed early to allow re-growth for the following rotation, and of course, you must ensure grass does not run out before your next rotation begins. Perennial ryegrass only ever has three live leaves on every individual plant (tiller) at any time; once the fourth leaf starts to grow, the first and oldest leaf dies. Grazing swards at the 3 leaf stage is key to prevent plants from getting to the fourth-leaf stage and dying, this reduces wastage and the build-up of unproductive dead leaves at the base of the sward. Remember, grazing grasses too

early, before the second new leaf appears, can damage grass persistency. If a plant's reserves have not been fully restored, future growth will be in jeopardy. It is easier to cut and round bale excess grass than it is to start buffer feeding when swards become depleted so always err on the side of caution when choosing fields for grazing and allow a little more than you think will be required.

When in a grazing cycle, the two main obstacles faced when managing swards are soil conditions and rainfall. Be careful with heavy land, especially after periods of rain as poaching of swards can reduce growth rates by as much as 20%. Visual checks of your fields will soon bring any issues to your attention and simple things like on/off grazing or temporarily moving stock to drier land will help alleviate any ground condition issues.

Grazing swards in prolonged dry spells of weather can be equally testing, both in terms of production and patience! It is important to maintain grass covers by reducing demand by using a supplement forage or concentrate. The dry matter content of swards will likely have increased significantly so paddocks should in theory last longer. Give some consideration to strip grazing paddocks rather than block grazing during a dry period, as anything not grazed down to 4cm is wasted forage. Ensuring swards are not overgrazed is vital during a dry time and leaving a longer residual will help the grass recover guicker for the next rotation.

White clover is important for grazing swards, fixing up to 150kg/ha per year of atmospheric nitrogen, it reduces the need for bagged nitrogen and improves soil structure and stock performance. It can also help with the seasonal dip in grass growth in the summer.

Multi species swards with herbs, legumes and grasses respond well to rotational grazing. They offer benefits for soil structure from deeper rooting species, animal performance and animal health due to their higher mineral and protein content. As well as maintaining production during dry spells as they are better able to cope. Multi species herbal leys are becoming more common as the transition to ELMS (Environmental Land Management Scheme) progresses.

#### Monitor your swards pre and post grazing.

vield.

Before livestock start to graze, carry out a visual assessment and look for any issues that may affect production later in the year. Early action on broad-leaved weeds prevents an unmanageable infestation later in the year. Ask yourself; Is your sward dense enough to carry animals when grazing without poaching? Is your grass a healthy green colour or is it starting to show signs of stress or nutrient deficiency? Patchy areas in your sward can indicate compaction and poor soil structure.

Visual checks after grazing could perhaps identify grasses that haven't been eaten off as well as others. Perhaps the seed mixture used in this field isn't ticking all the boxes or perhaps annual meadow grass and other weed grasses are starting to take over. Making all of these observations will help you identify which swards need over-seeding or re-seeding. In an ideal world, at least 15% of your grazing fields should be re-seeded every year but we know that isn't always possible. Re-seed where you can and if other swards need a boost for a couple of years then over-seed with varieties that have been tested based on density, palatability and **UK Grass Seed Experts** 

UK Grass



## Sustain for a better future

## NWF Agriculture fully supports the Net Zero initiatives and is committed to helping livestock farmers achieve their future goals.

The NWF Fusion sustainability project plan features a number of pillars that span from the feed mills and transport to formulations and farm level advice, all supporting future sustainability.

British beef is produced to some of the highest welfare and environmental standards across the globe. The UK climate is naturally very well suited to growing grass, which is converted to protein for an ever-growing human population.

British farming is incredibly varied, from extensive grass-based systems which allow carbon capture and facilitates the biogenic cycle, through to intensive systems that drive growth rates and meet the growing consumer demand quicker.

With customers informing us that they are under increasing pressure to prove their sustainability credentials, NWF Agriculture are committed to supporting British Beef farmers reduce their carbon footprint. As part of this, we are able to provide on farm feeding solutions which promote cattle health and performance.

#### DATES FOR THE DIARY

- Westmorland Show Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th September
- UK Dairy Day Wednesday 15th September
- Dairy Show Wednesday 6th October
- AgriScot Wednesday 17th November



Enquiries: 0800 756 2787 | Orders: 0800 262397 E Mail: nbteam@nwfagriculture.co.uk



www.nwfagriculture.co.uk

The information contained herein is taken from sources we believe reliable, but NWF Agriculture Ltd does not guarantee that it is accurate or complete and should be used for information purposes only. E&OE. © NWF Agriculture Ltd 2021.

