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Get the basics right in calf rearing

By Hannah Farrell, NWF Youngstock Specialist

Successful calf rearing is a piece of cake if you get these basics right. If you get these basics wrong, however, it doesn't matter what products, milk replacers or compounds you feed, you will never achieve optimum results.



So, what are the six essential elements in the calf-rearing cake?

Colostrum

It's nothing new to say colostrum should be fed as soon as possible after birth – ideally within 6 hours. However, don't forget that colostrum is a 'nutrient soup', and needs to be chilled to prevent bacteria multiplication; don't feed bacteria, dirt and flies to unprotected newborn calves!

1

Cover the colostrum bucket and, if freezing, make the pack as flat and thin as possible to aid a quick thawing process. Newborn calves require 200g of IgG; good colostrum carries 50g/litre, meaning a four-litre litre feed rate is required.

Remember colostrum quality varies, so you may need to feed more. If in doubt, use a colostrometer to judge quality (measure with colostrum at room temperature for accuracy).

Cleanliness

Calf feeding equipment, calving pens, calf pens etc must be as clean as you possibly can make them, otherwise calves are exposed to all additional levels bacteria naturally found in the environment.

2

Consistency

Calves, like most livestock, thrive on routine and consistency. Aim to make every feed the calf receives the best possible and on time; a consistent, strong nutrient supply will give the calf all the fight it needs against bacteria and viruses trying to invade.

3

Check the label

Always check the label of any product you are feeding to your calves so you know what the ingredients and nutrient levels are. Ensure you are also feeding to the correct rates specified.

4

Comfort

Calves need to nest into their beds; they aren't yet ruminants, so don't produce their own body heat like an adult ruminating animal. Lying in damp or wet areas pulls heat from their body, necessitating use of their body reserves of energy to try to stay warm; body energy which ideally should be used for growth.

A balance needs to be struck between keeping calves as warm and snug as possible (drafts also remove body heat) and not eliminating all air movement. Calves lie down for around 19 hours per day, so their noses inhale a lot of potential ammonia from their bedding, so ensure it is as clean and deep as possible, and allow some slow air movement through the shed.

As a quick test, sniff the air for ammonia as you enter the calf shed, then again at bedding level. Ammonia inhalation on a long term basis will irritate the airways and pre-dispose the calf to pneumonia.

Also, as a rule of thumb, increase milk replacer feed levels by 100g per day for every five degrees below 15°C, as a calf can't keep itself warm below this temperature.

5

Calories

The latest research on feeding calves shows maximising nutrition during the milk feeding stages activates a process known as epigenetics. This allows the genetic potential of the calf to be expressed later in life.

It can be thought of as a corridor with lots of doors; the doors are future growth and production and, if we don't feed enough during this stage, we don't open these doors for the future. If we progress down the corridor without opening the doors during early calf rearing, they never get opened, and future production is compromised.

Calves should be feed around 900g/head/day of a good quality, balanced milk replacer. Step the feed rate up, and step wean for the best results.

6



NEW
for 2023



The NWF calf milk replacer range is formulated to provide options for every calf rearing system and budget.

NWF ULTRA MILK EMERALD

21.5% Protein 18% Oil

A skimmed milk-based replacer, containing Greenguard package ensuring that early bloom and healthy calves is promoted.

NWF ULTRA LIFE - WHEY

24% Protein, 20% Oil

This is a LifeStart accredited whey-based milk replacer. It is suitable for accelerated heifer rearing programmes. This replacer contains the full additive pak.

LIFE START
SETS LIFE PERFORMANCE

NWF ULTRA HI PRO HEIFER

26% Protein, 17% Oil

This high protein, whey-based milk replacer is suitable for accelerated heifer rearing programmes. This replacer contains the full additive pak.

NWF ULTRA MILK BLUE

22% Protein, 19% Oil

NWF's most popular milk replacer. High specification formulation on a whey powder base. A generally good all-rounder calf milk replacer.

NWF ULTRA MILK RUBY

24% Protein 20% Oil

A superior quality, whey-based calf milk replacer, with elevated levels of oil and milk protein to promote accelerated growth and development at this critical stage of life. This replacer contains the Greenguard package.

NWF ULTRA MILK SAPPHIRE

22.5% Protein 18% Oil

A high-quality whey-based milk replacer, a good all-rounder replacer which has the addition of Greenguard to support digestive health and performance.

NWF ULTRA LIFE ELITE

22.5% Protein, 22.5% Oil

A highly digestible skim-based milk replacer, grow healthier more robust calves with this LifeStart approved calf milk replacer which. Safe to feed at elevated litres by managing the feed curve on the way to weaning.

LIFE START
SETS LIFE PERFORMANCE

NWF ULTRA LIFE - SKIM

24% Protein, 20% Oil

A LifeStart accredited skim-based milk replacer containing the full additive pak. It is suitable for accelerated heifer rearing programmes.

LIFE START
SETS LIFE PERFORMANCE

MILKIVIT ENERGIZED

CALF MILK REPLACER

22.5% Protein, 25% Oil

A LifeStart accredited skimmed milk replacer to support optimal development, resilience to disease and longevity of calves.

NWF ULTRA MILK YELLOW

22% Protein, 18% Oil

A top quality, 100% milk protein skimmed milk replacer also containing the full additive pak. It is ideal for many systems, particularly those wanting something special from their youngstock.

Feeding with precision for profit



Precisely formulating rations to ensure cattle are being fed as economically and efficiently as possible sits at the heart of profitable beef herd. With efficiencies and cost savings at the forefront of beef farmer's minds, tailoring feed to suit a specific system or nutritional requirement is a constant and dynamic requirement.

NWF Agriculture has the ability to maximise production while minimising cost as a result of the large range of high-quality raw materials and feed supplements available. With so many variations of system, animal type and market requirements it is impossible to be specific and brief at the same time. However, regardless of those factors there are some points that are key to rearing and finishing cattle effectively.

GET A GOOD START – EARLY LIFE GROWTH IS KEY TO ACHIEVING A GOOD EARLY FEED CONVERSION EFFICIENCY

- Ensure sufficient colostrum intakes of good quality colostrum – use a refractometer to determine a minimum of 50 IgG/litre.
- Whether your own or are buying in, check calves have a healthy dry navel, are alert and bright eyed and showing good conformation.
- Achieve pre-weaning growth rates of at least 0.8kg/h/d.
- Encourage early concentrate intakes and always offer clean fresh water and chopped straw.

GUIDE TO GROWING: KEY POINTS

- Rearing growth rates should average greater than 1.0kg/h/d.
- Intakes will be relative to the animal's weight, approx. 2–2.5% liveweight.
- Recognise dam and sire breed to determine the potential frame and conformation, e.g. early maturing domestic breeds may require a longer growing period compared to a larger continental breed.
- Protein is required during the rearing period for metabolism and frame growth, particularly pre puberty. Typically, 15%–17% protein is required.
- Growing rations should be high in fibre, with moderate ME and starch. High levels of starch are not recommended as this can lead to unwanted fat deposition, especially in early maturing breeds.
- Ensure a good quality mineral is used to help energy metabolism, growth and vitality.

FUNDAMENTALS FOR FINISHING: KEY POINTS

- This period typically grows the final 100–150kg of weight on a significantly more concentrated diet.
- Finished growth rates should average greater than 1.2kg/h/d.
- Intakes will be relative to the animal's weight, approx. 2% liveweight.
- Dietary proteins can drop to approx. 12%.
- Rapid weight gain requires feeding high cereal-based rations, starch level must rise to a minimum of 20% but ideally closer to 35%.
- Ensure a minimum of 10% structural fibre is added to stabilise rumen function.
- Consider offering rock salt or a rumen buffer such as Sodium Bicarbonate or Acid Buf.

NWF Beef Feed Range

Profitable beef production depends on maximising growth rates and feed efficiencies to ensure the animal is fit for the desired market.

NWF STARTER FEEDS

The preweaning phase is the most efficient period of an animal’s life where their feed to growth conversion is at its highest. Getting calves off to the best possible start is fundamental to promote a healthy and productive beef animal.

NWF Calf Pellets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A high quality starter pellet which is suitable from birth until weaning.• A high energy, palatable feed formulated to promote early intakes and rumen development.• Contain NWF Progress Plus, a comprehensive mineral and additive package.
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NWF REARER, GROWER AND FINISHER FEEDS

Whatever the production system and the forages and straights fed, NWF have a wide range of feed and nutritional solutions to help maximise animal performance.

NWF Vital Rearer Nuts	A cost-effective rearing nut to compliment a straw or silage-based diet. Available in a variety of protein percentages.
NWF Super Rearer Nuts	A specialist 18% or 16% rearer diet to maintain a high growth rate post weaning. The diet will compliment a straw or silage-based diet.
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.
Pedigree Beef	An intensive beef finisher diet, high in barley that helps promote growth.
Intensive Beef	An intensive beef finisher diet, high in barley that helps promote growth. Intensive Beef is available with and without yeast.
Goldstar Beef Plus	A 14% protein, high energy maize based finisher diet containing yeast.
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.



NWF BEEF BLENDS

In addition to the range of standard beef blends, NWF can formulate and supply bespoke blends to suit your system.

NWF Standard Blends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cattle Rearer• Beef Grower B2• Beef Finisher B1• Amino Mix 34
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Fusion
Sustainability for a better future

The NWF Fusion feed range is formulated with provenance of raw materials in mind, in addition to not containing soya, soya hull or palm kernel. The inclusion of NWF’s protected feeds (Ultra Pro-R and Ultra Starch-W) ensure that the nutritional make up is not compromised.

Available for beef herds is Fusion Rearer 16 and 18.

Feeding Maize

By Jonathan Jackson, NWF Forage Specialist



Beef finishing diets based on maize silage are proven to show animals can perform above 1.5kg of daily liveweight gain. Top performing cattle are taken from 120kg to 620kg in 326 days. For optimum gains it is essential that the diet is balanced for protein and mineral content. Your local NWF feed specialist can assist you with this.

Maize silage feed characteristics

- High energy, high starch
- Cattle and sheep adapt to it easily in rations
- Palatable
- Consistent feed value
- Low protein content so should be fed with reasonably high-protein feeds

The digestibility of maize remains fairly consistent throughout the growing season. As the crop matures, the quality of stem and leaf declines, but this is offset by the increase in grain in the cob, which is highly digestible and high in starch. This is why harvesting at the correct stage is essential to maximise nutritional value.

There are a number of situations when the use of silage additives may help feed quality, therefore, at harvest consider using NWF Sila-Guard Maize additive.

SITUATION	CHALLENGES
>35% DM at harvest.	Dry maize is difficult to consolidate
Long-chop length (>20 mm).	Long-chop maize is difficult to consolidate
Feeding out during hot weather	Warmer maize is more likely to deteriorate
Wide clamp face/slow feeding out rate	Maize left exposed the air for a long time is more likely to deteriorate
Fast clamping/ insufficient consolidation possible	Poorly compacted maize will have significant oxygen levels which can result in aerobic spoilage.
Aerobic spoilage experienced in the past	An additive may prevent this, but should not be a substitute for poor management pre-ensiling.

ADVANTAGES OF FEEDING MAIZE



- High yield, a well grown crop of maize can easily yield 15t/ha of dry matter.
- Offers an excellent break crop for weed control and a lead into new grass leys.
- If on a supermarket contract the inclusion of maize silage in a finishing ration increases the white/creamy colour of the carcase fat compared to cattle fed diets based on grazed or conserved grass. This is because maize contains fewer carotenoids than grass.
- Well grown maize silage contains 25-30% starch and with Dent varieties having bypass starch in the kernels. This can cover all the starch requirements to finish cattle.

DISADVANTAGES OF FEEDING MAIZE



- Generally, mineral content of maize silage is relatively low, so supplementation is required. Talk to your NWF feed specialist about a mineral analysis of your maize and mineral to address deficiencies.
- Maize silage is low in protein (8-9%). A number of feeds and liquid feeds are available from NWF to balance the diet.





What the ideal TMR looks like, and how to create it

Given that feed remains one of our biggest pressures on profitability, KEENAN are here with expert advice on creating TMRs to maximise production from homegrown forages.

For some time, many nutritionists and feed specialists have promoted cutting fibrous dry matter (straw, hay, and dryer silages) to the width of the animal's muzzle to achieve the all-important 'scratch factor' in the rumen.

To recap, 'scratch factor' is achieved when fibre causes abrasion of the rumen wall to stimulate alkaline saliva production and rumination. This in turn promotes better digestion so that more feed input converts into milk or meat output.

Nowadays a cow's requirement for dietary fibre must be assessed not by muzzle width, but rather by both **particle size** and **chemical fibre content**. This is known as physically effective **neutral detergent fibre** (peNDF).

Current research from the University of Wisconsin stipulates that a **5mm particle chop length** is required to be a physically effective NPD. Any shorter, conversion of input to output will be compromised. Any longer, and intakes are commonly reduced.

This is only one aspect of the balancing act. Fibre type and consistency also factor into feed conversion efficiency performance.

Different diet feeders do different jobs

We know that the physical presentation of a ration directly impacts on dry matter intake and rumen function, and we know that different diet feeders create very different physical presentation results.

When it comes to choosing a diet feeder – there is no right or wrong choice. Whether you should choose a horizontal paddle or a vertical auger tub depends on many different factors. Factors including farm layout, business goals, base products, and feeding operators. The physical property of the rations produced by the two different diet feeding machines are very different. A horizontal mixed ration is typically more open and airier than that of a vertical auger which tends to be denser.

The KEENAN MechFiber uses a soft tumbling action and precise blade configuration to protect peNDF whilst chopping the fibres into precise lengths that will offer that all-important 'scratch factor' in the rumen.

The latest MechFiber+ range boasts an increased angle on the paddles, rounded castelations, and a new blade configuration for a **faster tumbling action and further optimised ration presentation**. Improvements achieved on a 400 head beef farm with the latest MechFiber 320+ showed a reduced feed cost per kg of liveweight gain by over £1 through reducing feed waste and feeding an accurately balanced and well-presented ration.

In any case, consistency is key. In the first part, consistency of peNDF. In the second, how consistently we can keep that mix the same for every cow, every day.

This is where the benefits of feed tech such as Alltech InTouch comes in. The InTouch toolkit, made up of a control unit, a mobile pp, and an online dashboard, puts precision feed management at the farmers' fingertips. This is all driven and supported by a specialist on-farm and remote team missioned to work with farm teams to improve feeding accuracy and optimise TMR performance.

Signs your TMR could be better

If used incorrectly, even a brand-new machine will not offer you the best possible mix. Here are the top 4 signs that your ration has room for improvement:

1. Fibres in the TMR are unevenly chopped and too long or short,
2. Manure is either too loose or solid and contains visibly undigested food,
3. Cows are swishing their tails, are not cudding and not lying down,
4. There are fibrous leftovers when the TMR has been eaten up.

And here are 4 of the most likely causes for concern:

1. Inaccurate under or overloading,
2. Blunt or missing blades,
3. Incorrect loading order,
4. Insufficient mixing between ingredients.

If you think your cows and your bank balance could benefit from a zero-fee professional appraisal of your TMR, please contact the Alltech InTouch team by email contactintouch@alltech.com or telephone **0800 587 3297**.



Beef Finishing Systems

By Paul Mardell, NWF Technical Development Manager



Finishing beef systems can vary, however, feeding finishing cattle for a short period of time for maximum liveweight gain remains the aim for most producers. A well-balanced and consistent diet can help finish animals more efficiently, improving DLWG, reducing feed usage, and increasing output, therefore, reducing the overall carbon footprint.

It is really important for any beef system to monitor the liveweight gain (LWG) and feed conversion rate (FCR) in order to ensure your beef enterprise is a financial success. The most crucial factor is knowing the cost per kg of liveweight gain.

Feed is a major cost in all beef finishing systems and taking steps to improve feed efficiency will improve margins. Nutritional, genetic, gender, animal health and management also can influence feed efficiency.

Finishing diets should be introduced slowly to help the rumen adapt to the increased starch and lower protein levels within the diet composition. Once fully transitioned intakes of concentrate could reach 8kg+ when animals are eating ad-lib. Care should be taken to ensure forage is available at all times, straw with its higher NDF, physical structure and buffering capacity would be preferable. Whatever the type of forage is supplied it should be clean, mould free and dust free. During the finishing phase overall appetite falls in relation to body weight, so it is important that intakes are encouraged through management with plenty of available feed access and feed should be kept fresh and palatable. Fresh, clean water should always be available, and intakes may be increased with the drier concentrate/straw diet.

Typical finisher guidelines are:

Finishing diet nutrient requirements	
Nutrient in total ration	Guideline
Dry matter intakes (DMI)	1.7 to 2% of liveweight
Target DLWG (kgs)	1.5 to 1.85
Energy (MJ ME/kg DM)	>12.0+
Crude Protein (%)	12-15
Starch and sugar (%)	>25

- Heifers may be better suited to slower rates of gain to ensure the minimum carcase weight is achieved without excessive levels of fat deposition.
- Energy, particularly from starch, is vital to drive liveweight gain in finishing rations.
- Cereals in blends should be cracked or rolled and not finely ground.
- Increasing CP levels above 14% in Finishing Holstein bulls show no growth rate response.
- Inclusion of long fibre is best supplied in either separate racks or mixed into the complete ration.
- Oil can be a useful rich energy source, but excessive oil in the ration can depress intake.
- Ensure gradual transition to high-concentrate diets and ad-lib feeding.
- Never let ad-lib feed hoppers run out so that animals gorge when they are refilled.
- Consider including rumen buffers or yeast.
- Implement a good health program.

NWF Agriculture offers a standard range of beef finishing ranges with bespoke diets available.



Making Beef Farming Profitable and Fun....!!

by Sarah Harker, BVM&S MRCVS, Farm Gate Vets



Sarah Harker,
BVM&S
MRCVS



The title of this article may be a bit optimistic but at least it's got your attention so please bear with me. Farming beef cattle has always brought its challenges but perhaps more so now than ever with labour shortages, tightening of rules and regulations and uncertainties regarding the level and nature of future financial support, to name but a few. There are however a few areas that if addressed, will help to minimise the stress and maximise returns.

Breed Selection:

Management is easier if a breed is chosen that suits the land type, building availability, labour etc. Pedigree or show cattle requiring a high level of stockmanship and management can be both emotionally and financially rewarding but risks, costs and losses can be higher. Maternal traits should not be neglected. A cow needn't look like a show animal herself but should ideally calve naturally, every year and milk her calf well to maximise the saleability of the calf.

Calving Ease:

As vets, callouts to calvings are often where we see our beef clients the most. The pursuit of the best end product, be it stores, breeding or finished cattle, drives some farms to cow and bull choices that risk more difficult calvings. If the value of the end product doesn't balance the increased costs, losses and emotional toll of getting it then it is not sustainable long-term.

Handling Facilities:

Many jobs are made quicker, safer and much more likely to get done with a successful outcome if handling facilities are good. TB tests, vaccination and worming treatments, calvings and caesarians etc are less daunting with the right set-up.

Temperament:

Tying in with the above, avoid making things harder work by not tolerating wild cattle. Choose breeds, or individuals within breeds that are easier managed.



Culling Policy:

Every animal in your herd needs to earn its keep. A sensible culling policy should take into account fertility, temperament, lameness and other health issues to name but a few. A profitable herd cannot carry passengers.

Nutrition:

Homegrown grazing and forages represent the cheapest way to feed your herd and analysis of these allows you to maximise their value. Selection of breeds and individuals within breeds that utilise forages maximally is also important as purchased feeds represent a major cost. Discussion with your NWF feed specialist will help to ensure you choose the right products to supplement forage.

Disease Prevention:

A healthy herd will create less work, less losses and more profit. A proper plan to limit diseases such as scour, pneumonia and lameness should be drawn up, and tailored to your farm. A health plan shouldn't be seen as a pointless paperwork exercise, but rather a valuable part of farm management. If I had to pick one disease that I would choose to control before all others, it would be BVD, but I haven't space here to explain my reasoning!

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Advantages of growing a Dent maize hybrid

By Rebecca Blakemore, Corteva Forage Specialist for Northern England & Scotland



For years livestock farmers have commented that maize silage feeds better when it has been in the clamp for three or more months. This is because flint hybrids have a higher proportion of vitreous starch, densely bound in a protein matrix which makes it less readily available for the first three months. Ruminant starch digestion increases over time in fermented storage due to bacterial action solubilising the zein proteins that surround starch granules.

After three months in the silage pit, activity within the clamp breaks down the protein matrix explaining why flint type maize silage feeds better after three months.

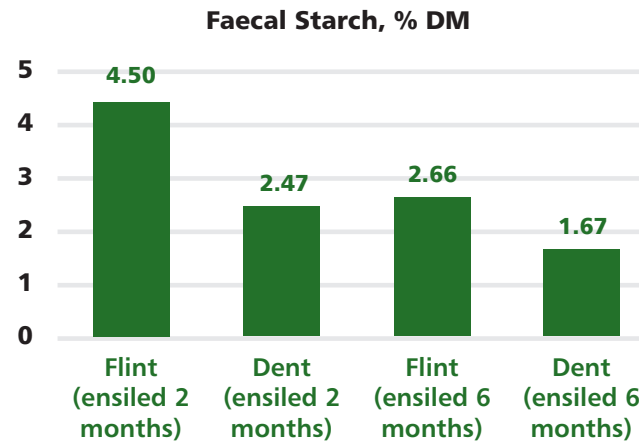
Dent starch is high in soft, floury endosperm and is more readily broken down in the rumen than the hard, vitreous endosperm of flint starch. This means it is significantly more available in the first three months of ensiling. Another benefit of the soft, floury genetics is a significant reduction in faecal starch losses.



Planning feed out:

As maize silage ages in the clamp, the products of fermentation break down more starch and differences in degradability become less significant. Farmers are therefore recommended to harvest dent hybrids last, so they are the first silage fed out of the clamp to capture their starch degradability advantage.

Faecal starch content by lactating cows fed flint or dent maize silage stored two or six months prior to feeding (genetic type $P < 0.01$ and storage time $P < 0.01$), as per graph below.



Source: 2015 French Dairy Trial, University of Lorraine Laflotte, A, L. Aubry, B. Mahanna and F. Owens. Proceedings 2016 JAM Meeting Abstract 15902, Salt Lake City, July 2016

Genetic advantages of M³ Dent starch

The M³ classification is used to highlight the Pioneer hybrids that have high rumen degradability and have been proven in PACTS trials to be adapted to UK conditions.

When feeding dairy or beef cattle, M³ Dent genetics provide a significant nutritional advantage which is increased starch ruminal degradability.



Dent starch is high in soft-floury endosperm and is more readily broken down in the rumen than the hard, vitreous endosperm of flint starch.

Faecal starch losses

- Starch that is not broken down and digested in the rumen or hindgut will pass through the cow to be excreted in the faeces
- Nutritionally, this is an expensive loss indicating poor utilization, nutrient losses and wasted energy
- Ideally, residual starch in faecal samples should be less than 5%, but ideally less than 3%

Source: Progressive Dairy, 11th Oct 2011-Faecal starch analysis: a closer look (Jon Urness)

P7034: The first hybrid of this maturity that has dent type grain and has been bred specifically for the cool maritime locations found in the UK and to meet the M³ advancement criteria. This hybrid flowers early and produces silage with a very high starch content and starch yield. Due to its faster starch degradation rate, it should be clamped last and fed first, thus smoothing the feeding transition to new crop silage.

NWF Traded Products

KEY PRODUCTS FOR YOUR BEEF HERD

NWF UltraMin Powdered Minerals 25kg	
UltraMin Suckler Cow	High Vitamin E to boost the immune system and fertility as well as high Phosphorous which is essential for energy metabolism.
UltraMin Cattle GP	High levels of all vitamins and minerals to suit a wide variety of systems, includes Intellibond Copper and Zinc to support fertility and immunity.
UltraMin Cattle Hi Mag	Contains multiple magnesium sources all of high quality and bioavailability, also formulated with Intellibond Copper to support fertility and immunity during the grazing season.
UltraMin Intensive Beef	High Vitamin E levels suited to be used with most cereal based diets, helping to reduce the risk of white muscle disease.
UltraMin Dry Cow	High Vitamin E, Selenium and Iodine to boost the immune system and cell repair in the dry period.

NWF Mineral Buckets 20kg or 80kg	
Cattle GP	A convenient, highly palatable way of providing balanced minerals and trace elements to achieve optimum health and performance.
High Mag	Provides three sources of magnesium for protection against grass staggers in suckler cows.

NWF Protected Feeds	
NWF Ultra Soy	A high quality vegetable protein which, as a result of precise treatment of extracted soya bean meal, contains a high level of Digestible Undegradable Protein (DUP).
NWF Ultra-Pro R	A high-quality vegetable protein which, as a result of precise treatment of rapeseed meal can be used to balance the Rumen Degradable Protein (ERDP) and DUP content of the ration.
NWF Ultra Starch-W	A cost-effective source of by-pass starch, a product based on rolled wheat but with a similar level of by-pass starch to maize.

Molasses	
Molale	Highly palatable with high energy, used to improve intakes and digestibility of forages. Suitable for all feeding systems but not recommended for sheep.
Potblack	A cost effective method of adding protein and sugars to rations low in protein such as straw, maize and wholecrop.

Also available: Protected Fats | Rumen Paks and Buffers | Salts

Market Outlook: We need a UK food TSAR

Neil Shard, National Beef Association (NBA)



I was fortunate enough to attend the Farm to Fork UK Food Summit at number 10 Downing Street on the 16th May.

Credit where credits due, for a Prime Minister to create and host the first event of its kind for the industry, also for being brave enough to call it a UK Summit - this is exactly where the problems begin. I cannot go into too many details of what happened on the day, but news outlets have already stated that retailers informed Government that food has been too cheap for too long - this was a welcome, but long overdue statement.

Within the breakout session in number 10, I directly, but politely requested Therese Coffey install a food TSAR in the UK. There is no room for individual devolved Governments to determine food production from the smaller populated countries to achieve dubious environmental gain, whilst forcing England to import more beef from systems of potentially inferior health, welfare and environmental balance.

The sheer lack of knowledge within Governments across the whole UK of the numbers involved in beef production are extremely scary, they talk about people eating less, they may well do, but we import beef from a suckler herd size of 1.2 million cows. The little bit less takes a seriously long time against a backdrop of increasing population.

The only sensible way to monitor and measure food security, self-sufficiency and resilience is to look at the UK as one - I am not anti-devolution - but it clearly is not fit for purpose in all sectors, all of the time! Below is an

extract from a Letter from Chris Stark - Chief Executive of the Climate Change Committee (CCC) to the Scottish Rural Affairs and Islands Committee - stating a requirement for the Beef Herd in Scotland to reduce by 26% by 2045, or basically 100,000 less cows. This is just another highlighting the lack of joint-up thinking, where do the CCC think the beef from the 100,000 lost cows will come from? - Probably Brazil and another chunk of rain forests lost!

"But - Very clearly -livestock numbers must decline if emissions are to fall. In our modelling that happens through diet change (coupled with changes to imports/exports), dairy cattle, beef and sheep numbers fall by 29%, 26% and 26% respectively by 2045", Chris Stark, Chief Executive, Climate Control Committee

The equations are just daft - Westminster provides the budget - the devolved Governments can spend as they like, with no interest in food production and the UK as a whole can go hungry or import from far flung parts of the world.

I await with bated breath to see if the Summit at number 10 delivers some real positive change.



www.nationalbeefassociation.com

AUTUMN CALF COMPETITION!

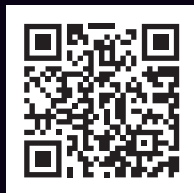
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- ✓ ½ tonne of NWF Calf Pellets
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- ✓ 2 x NWF Beanie Hats
- ✓ 2 x NWF Bodywarmers

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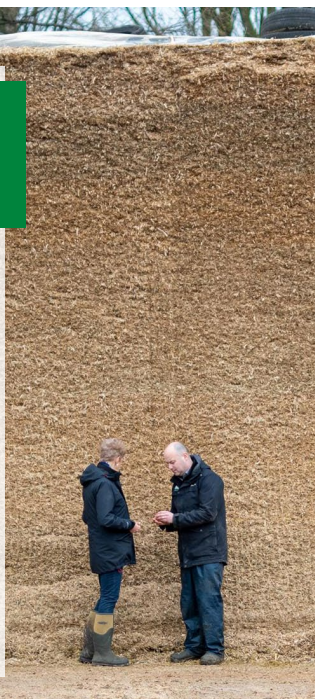
www.nwfagriculture.co.uk/calfcompetition

Closing date 30.11.23, terms online.

Technical Services to support your farm & livestock

NWF Agriculture provide a comprehensive portfolio of services for your farm.

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- DUNG & DIET SIEVING
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- MOBILITY SCORING
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- MINERAL ANALYSIS
- COW & CALF SIGNALS
- CLAMP CAPACITIES
- YOUNGSTOCK GROWTH MONITOR
- WATER TESTING
- SOIL ANALYSIS



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



www.nwfagriculture.co.uk

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