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YOUR NEWSLETTER FROM CREDITON MILLING COMPANY

Using Total LWG



MATT HOLMES 07751 743079
RUMINANT SPECIALIST

In beef production, effective monitoring is essential for optimising efficiency and profitability. One of the most insightful metrics for gauging productivity is the kilograms of liveweight produced per day on the farm.

This benchmark provides a clear and quantifiable measure of performance, enabling farmers to make informed decisions that enhance both the health of their livestock and the economic viability of their operations.

Why liveweight gains matter

Measuring liveweight gains per day offers several advantages over other metrics. It provides a direct indication of how well cattle are converting feed into body mass, which is a crucial aspect of efficient beef production. Higher daily liveweight gains mean that animals are reaching market weight more quickly, reducing the overall costs associated with feeding, housing, and managing the herd. This efficiency not only boosts profitability but also enhances resource use, contributing to more sustainable farming practices.

Monitoring growth rates

To accurately monitor liveweight gains, regular weighing of cattle is essential. This practice allows farmers to track growth rates and identify any issues early. For instance, if a group of animals is not gaining weight as expected, it could indicate problems with feed quality, health issues, or management practices that need adjustment. By identifying and addressing these issues promptly, farmers can maintain optimal growth rates and prevent potential losses.

Optimising feed efficiency

Feed efficiency is a critical factor in beef production. The goal is to maximise the amount of weight gained per unit of feed consumed. By using liveweight gains as a benchmark, farmers can evaluate the effectiveness of their feeding strategies. This involves not only the quantity of feed but also its nutritional quality. Providing a balanced diet that meets the specific needs of the cattle at different growth stages is essential for achieving high liveweight gains.

Health and welfare considerations

Healthy cattle are more likely to achieve optimal liveweight gains. Regular health checks and a proactive approach to disease prevention are crucial. This includes maintaining a clean environment, implementing a vaccination programme, and monitoring for signs of illness.

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DAIRY

POULTRY

BEEF & SHEEP

FORAGE

BEEF & SHEEP

Using Total LWG *continued from page 1*

BEEF & SHEEP

Stress can also impact growth rates, so ensuring that cattle have adequate space, access to clean water, and minimal handling stress is important.

Environmental and economic benefits

Focusing on liveweight gains aligns with both environmental and economic goals. Efficient growth reduces the amount of feed and resources required per kilogram of beef produced, lowering the carbon footprint of the operation.

Economically, faster-growing cattle reduce the time to market, improving cash flow and reducing overhead costs associated with longer production cycles.

Benchmarking and continuous improvement

Establishing benchmarks for liveweight gains allows farmers to set targets and measure progress. This data-driven approach facilitates continuous improvement.

By comparing current performance against historical data and industry standards, farmers can identify trends and implement changes to enhance productivity. For example, changes in feed composition, grazing management, or herd genetics can all be evaluated based on their impact on liveweight gains.



Practical steps

1. **Regular weighing:** Implement a schedule for regular weighing to monitor growth rates accurately. This could be monthly or quarterly, depending on the size of the herd and management practices.
2. **Feed analysis:** Regularly analyse feed to ensure it meets the nutritional requirements of the cattle. Adjust rations based on the age, weight, and health of the animals.
3. **Health management:** Maintain a comprehensive health management programme, including vaccinations, parasite control, and routine health checks.
4. **Data management:** Use digital tools and record-keeping systems to track liveweight gains and other relevant data. This information can be invaluable for making informed decisions and tracking progress over time.
5. **Environmental conditions:** Ensure that cattle have access to clean water, adequate shelter, and a stress-free environment to promote optimal growth.

Using kilograms of liveweight produced per day as a benchmark in beef production provides a clear and actionable metric for monitoring and improving farm performance. By focusing on growth rates, feed efficiency, health, and welfare, farmers can achieve significant gains in productivity and profitability. This approach not only benefits the farm's bottom line but also supports sustainable and responsible farming practices.

Fuel the Rumen First™ with Zinpro® IsoFerm®

Protein supplementation represents a significant expense in dairy rations. Unfortunately, dairy cattle struggle to efficiently convert feed nitrogen into milk and metabolizable protein.



MATT RANCE 07809 306571
FORAGE & NUTRITION SPECIALIST



Fuel the Rumen First™

DAIRY

The challenge lies in optimising feed digestion and utilisation within the rumen to maximise microbial protein yield and energy capture for milk production or growth.

Rumen fibre-digesting bacteria rely on branched-chain volatile fatty acids (BCVFAs), also known as isoacids, to digest fibrous feedstuffs. These essential nutrients serve as carbon sources, combining with highly digestible protein to produce crucial microbial protein and energy. Isoacids are vital for amino acid synthesis and milk production by the mammary gland.

Under certain dietary conditions, fibre-digesters may face an inadequate supply of isoacids, impacting microbial protein synthesis and fibre digestion.

Zinpro® IsoFerm® offers a game-changing alternative. By directly supplementing isoacids, rather than relying solely on RDP, dairy farmers can enhance efficiency. Fibre-digesting bacteria utilise isoacids more efficiently, leading to improved microbial yield and fibre digestion. The result? Enhanced nitrogen efficiency, better microbial protein production, and optimal utilisation of forage.

Zinpro IsoFerm is a proprietary blend of branched-chain volatile fatty acids (BCVFAs, or isoacids), an essential nutrient that fuels the rumen to perform more naturally to enable cows to be better cows.

Zinpro IsoFerm increases peak milk production and persistency with less average dry matter intake while maintaining body condition. This efficiency extends beyond milk production, with cows showing enhanced reproductive results and heat stress mitigation, making them more efficient than they have ever been before.

Autumn reseed: should we really mean August reseeds?



MARK TUCKER 07703734530
FORAGE SPECIALIST

As summer comes (all three days of it) and goes the farming calendar turns to autumn, and thought turn to reseeding, be it after cereals, grass or maize crops. However, there is a growing consensus that August may be a more strategic time for this task (maybe not for maize but you get my drift).



FORAGE

Earlier reseeding in August or sometimes even late July can offer numerous advantages, from better grass establishment and species survival to early utilisation and economic payback. Let's explore why August reseeds might be the optimal choice for your farm.

Optimum timing for grass establishment

Reseeding in August takes advantage of the generally warmer soil temperatures, which is crucial for rapid seed germination and early growth. This head start allows the grass to establish robust root systems before the cooler, wetter weather of autumn sets in. A well-established sward going into winter is more resilient and can better withstand the challenges of the colder months, ensuring a healthier pasture come spring.

Enhancing species survival and diversity

Earlier reseeding significantly boosts the chances of survival for desirable grass species such as perennial ryegrass and clover. These species are not only more nutritious for livestock but also improve soil structure and fertility. An August reseed allows these beneficial species to establish firmly, outcompeting fewer desirable plants and weeds. This competitive edge is crucial for maintaining a productive and sustainable pasture ecosystem.

Early utilisation and extended grazing

One of the primary benefits of reseeding in August is the potential for early utilisation. By spring, the grass is well-established and ready for grazing much earlier than if it were seeded in autumn. This early growth phase can extend the grazing season, reducing the need for supplementary feeding and lowering overall feed costs. It also provides fresh, high-quality forage at a time when it is most needed. On some occasions a silage or bale crop can be taken if conditions allow in late september

Weed reduction and grass management

Weed control is a constant challenge in grassland management. Reseeding in August can significantly reduce weed pressure. The rapid establishment of grass in the late summer months can outcompete many weed species, which struggle to establish themselves in a well-developed sward. This natural suppression of weeds reduces the need for chemical interventions, promoting a healthier and more environmentally friendly farming practice.

Economic payback and farm productivity

The economic advantages of earlier reseeding are substantial. Improved grass establishment and weed suppression led to higher forage yields, directly impacting the farm's bottom line. Better pasture quality translates to enhanced livestock performance,

whether in milk production for dairy cows or weight gain for beef cattle.

These improvements not only provide immediate economic benefits but also ensure a quicker return on the reseeding investment.

Additional considerations

There are several other factors to consider when planning an August reseed:

- **Soil preparation:** ensure the soil is well-prepared to maximise seed-to-soil contact. Proper preparation can significantly enhance germination rates and early growth. It's still critical to ensure correct pH and K levels are at the correct levels.
- **Weather conditions:** monitor weather forecasts to avoid dry spells immediately after seeding, as consistent moisture is crucial for seedling establishment.
- **Seed selection:** choose high-quality seed mixes that are well-suited to your specific soil type and farming goals.

While traditional practices favour autumn reseeding, shifting this task to August offers multiple benefits. From better grass establishment and species survival to weed reduction and economic gains, an August reseed can enhance overall farm productivity. For farmers aiming to optimise their grass management, considering an August reseed could be a massive positive on forage stocks and quality for years ahead.

Biosecurity in free-range poultry units

Biosecurity is the foremost line of defence against infectious diseases in commercial poultry, sometimes being the only safeguard, as with Avian Influenza.



ALISTAIR CHILCOTT
BVetMed MRCVS

Poultry Health Services
at Mount Vets

POULTRY

Implementing effective biosecurity in free-range layer sites requires careful planning of site layout, traffic flow, and identifying critical control points.

Site layout and biosecurity zones

Sites should be designed with clear demarcations between general biosecurity zones (e.g., packing and egg storage rooms) and specific biosecurity zones (areas in direct contact with birds). Foot dips with DEFRA-approved disinfectants at appropriate concentrations should be placed at junctions between zones, covered, replenished weekly, and used only with clean boots. However, as maintaining clean boots is challenging, having specific biosecurity-zone boots for staff and visitors is advisable.

Visitor and staff protocols

All visitors and staff must sign in and out, detailing previous farm visits for traceability. PPE, including coveralls, gloves, and boots, should be available for all personnel. Staff should not keep poultry at home, and other animals like cats and dogs should be kept off-site. Visits should be arranged from younger to older birds and from 'clean' to 'dirty' sites to minimize disease transmission risk. Between sheds, hands should be washed, and coveralls and boots changed.

Vehicle management

Vehicles must be washed and disinfected upon entry and parked outside the general biosecurity zone. Only essential vehicles such as feed lorries, which should be clean and disinfected on-arrival, should enter

the site. Eggs and dead birds should be stored in a central location, ideally off-site, to reduce vehicle traffic in biosecurity zones.

Feed and water hygiene

Feed bins must be kept dry to prevent mould and mycotoxin formation.

Maintaining drinking water hygiene is crucial for bird health and treatment efficacy. Water lines should be flushed and cleaned between flocks and during the flock lifecycle to prevent biofilm build-up, using hydrogen peroxide or chlorine-based sanitisers.

Cleaning and disinfection

Post-depletion cleaning is vital to prevent disease spread to new flocks. Sheds should be thoroughly washed, soaked with detergent, dried, and disinfected. Leaving sheds empty for at least 14 days can further reduce pathogens. Insecticides should be applied as soon as possible after depletion to be effective.

Equipment must be cleaned, disinfected, and kept shed-specific; if this is not possible for specific items, they should be disposed of and replaced before the new incoming flock.

Management of sick and dead birds

Sick birds should be isolated in separate hospital pens. Dead birds must be removed as soon as possible and stored in refrigerated facilities to prevent disease spread. Prompt removal of carcasses is essential to minimize pecking and disease transmission.

Rodent and insect control

Rodents transmit diseases and cause damage, making vigilance essential. Use traps, bait boxes, and vermin control specialists to minimize rodent numbers. Measures include sealing holes, removing feed/manure residues, and maintaining short grass. Insects like darkling beetles, red mites, and flies also transmit diseases. Keeping manure dry (>45% dry matter), using fly screens, and traps can help control insect populations.

Wild birds and environmental risks

Wild birds should be discouraged by removing spilled feed, covering air inlets with mesh, and avoiding standing water on the range. Proximity to other poultry farms and bodies of water where waterfowl are present poses biosecurity risks, as diseases can spread via airborne particles.

Summary of critical control points

Free-range poultry sites can enhance biosecurity by focusing on:

- Boundaries between biosecurity zones
- Management of staff and visitors
- Control of vehicle movement
- Proper feed and water hygiene
- Thorough cleaning and disinfection between flocks
- Handling of sick and dead birds
- Control of pests and insects
- Mitigation of risks from proximity to other poultry sites

By adhering to these guidelines, free-range poultry units can significantly reduce the risk of disease outbreaks and maintain healthier flocks.