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Treated slurry is an effective and affordable way to convert animal waste into a high value fertiliser. We look at additives and their benefits to you and your farm

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TOMORROW'S FARMER



DECEMBER / 2022
ISSUE 58

YOUR NEWSLETTER FROM CREDITON MILLING COMPANY

Keeping busy – a hen's guide

Another Avian Influenza housing order is upon those of us in England, so thoughts immediately go to how to keep our hens happy and entertained within their sheds.

Providing enrichment within this space has so many behavioural benefits for our poultry, as well as keeping them active, and redirecting and reducing any hostile behaviour. The most successful enrichments are often those that captivate the birds the most and allow the hen to elicit her natural foraging behaviour.

This foraging engages the hen, captures her attention, and is more likely to draw her back to the enrichment time and time again.

There are a variety of options when looking at what to introduce into your shed, and often providing the poultry with more than one type is the most successful approach.

- Hanging alfalfa bales
- Pecking Blocks
- Jute rope (hanging)

Commonly used are hanging alfalfa bales, these encourage pecking and pulling of the chopped alfalfa. Pecking blocks are also a familiar sight, providing another opportunity for the hen to peck and express her natural behaviour.

Straw and hay bales are another option, and are a cheaper alternative to the alfalfa bales, again, the pecking and pulling at the straw satisfies the hens need to express her foraging behaviour.

Tinsel filled clear plastic bottles, balls, and hanging CD's are also used in sheds, however often once the initial investigation by the hen has been completed, she rarely returns to the item, as there is little reward for her interest.

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DAIRY

POULTRY

BEEF & SHEEP

FORAGE

Slurry and additives

Treated slurry is an effective and affordable way to convert animal waste into a high value fertiliser.

As the newest member of the forage team, I am intrigued by the workings of additives and their benefits to you and your farm. The question I get asked most with regards to slurry additives is 'will they work with the parlour washings and other chemicals going into the lagoon?' The answer, is simply Yes! Basically, with the amount of slurry that goes in compared to the chemicals the bugs still work due to the different volumes.

Earlier this year I carried out a trial on a customer's farm to understand more about how this works. I visited the farm at regular intervals and took samples, pictures and videos. The results were as promised on the packet and we found reduced solids, less crusting (producing more homogenous and nutrient rich fertiliser), improved pumpability and less odours and flies. As well as looking at the lagoon I carried out soil samples and field walking again at regular intervals, it is still a little early to see the full results from this but

we are anticipating better soil health and higher crop yields. My customer is very happy with the results and is now a regular user of Maneuver Lagoon (Chr Hansen).

As well as the benefits already explained we can also see savings on time and fuel when stirring, as the bugs do most of the work for you, reducing stirring times before spreading.

I would also recommend looking at spreading times, for example the nitrogen available to the crop can be doubled by changing application to April rather than December or January and this is because the plant is in a better position to take it up.

As part of a muck management strategy, additives could improve profitability.

Now is the time to look at adding additives into your slurry lagoon as it starts to fill over the winter.



Night deliveries

As we all know, British Agriculture operates 24/7. With that in mind we were keen to incorporate this into our deliveries at CMC, offering our customers the option of having bulk feed deliveries throughout the night.

Special consideration would have to be taken as we understand that not all of our customers would be happy with a feed lorry turning up at 2am!

We began initially by having conversations with a few customers who we thought would be suitable for a night delivery. Once this had been established we then looked at average drop size, accessibility and locations of these farms - this information was

Lorry comparison

Over the last 20yrs the configuration of a feed delivery lorry has drastically changed. Average drop size was significantly lower, as was the size of the lorry.

4 wheelers would often be seen on farm – with a maximum pay load of 9 tonnes these were the workhorses of feed deliveries because they offered such good access to all sizes and types of farms.

Today our most common feed lorry is an 8 wheeler that has a pay load of 18 tonnes, double that of its predecessors. Rear steer axles, on board weighers and sleeper cabs are all but a few advances that the lorries have made in order to keep up modern day farming in the UK.

Environmental factors are a highly debated topic within the transport sector. With HGV's accounting for 18% of greenhouse gas emissions and 13% of NOx emissions for road transport in the UK, the emissions

rules for new lorries are very stringent. EURO V1 engines are standard in all new HGV's and with low particulate emissions they are considerably more efficient.

As in all areas of UK agriculture, advances within the transport sector are moving at a fast pace.

HGV's will soon follow in the footsteps of the car industry, with a shift from fossil fuel powered vehicles to low carbon alternatives such as electric and hydrogen. Although there is still a fair way to before we have our first alternatively fuelled HGV at CMC, I'm sure it will be a lot sooner than we all think!

CMC BEN WONNACOTT
TRANSPORT COORDINATOR



then collated and it was decided that an artic would be the most suitable vehicle for the job.

The next decision to make would be the timing's of the shift. 6pm until 6am gave us a 12 hour window which

would work well in terms of the operation at CMC where it can get quite congested with lorries loading throughout the day.

There was a certain degree of apprehension to begin with but now

Keeping busy – a hen's guide

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An important factor with shed enrichments, is that it is most successful when introduced at the point of housing your hens, or even better, during the rearing phase. In addition to this, a schedule of replacing enrichments once they have been used up is important for continuing to encourage the preferred behaviour.

A final note of caution with whatever items you add for enrichment, with the ever present threat of avian influenza, it is important to ensure they are stored in a bird proof, rodent proof barn or shed prior to being introduced into the shed, to prevent them becoming a vector for introducing AI into your housing.

When visiting our commercial farmers, the Poultry Team at CMC see many interesting enrichments on their travels, if you have identified a particular type of enrichment that your hens love, we'd love to hear about it...!

CMC LIZ WARNER
POULTRY SPECIALIST

the shift has been running for just over 18 months we are delighted with the outcome. As a Company who put customer satisfaction at the forefront of our priorities we feel that it complements the delivery options we provide and offers our customers a service that is unrivalled by our competitors.

CMC STEVE GULLEY
TRANSPORT COORDINATOR

Free support to help farmers navigate the Agricultural Transition in the South West

Cosmic are a social enterprise based in Honiton and have partnered in Business Information Point, alongside other local agencies, to provide free, tailored one to one advice, workshops, and specialist webinars to help farmers and land managers navigate the changes brought about by the Agricultural Transition. The project is funded by DEFRA.

Transition workshops

Discuss the changes coming through the transition, review funding options and plan strategies for the future.

One-to-one support

One-to-One support with an experienced agricultural advisor to discuss your farm to develop and document an action plan.

Small group webinars

Covering topics such as digital skills, succession planning, woodlands, environmental schemes, soil management, diversification, marketing, business planning and grant schemes.



Free advice

FUTURE FARMING RESILIENCE

Get free one-to-one support with an experienced agricultural advisor.

businessinfopoint.co.uk/FFR

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs | Devon County Council | DID

Digital training

Our workshops will build digital confidence and enable you to gain IT skills to better manage your farm business.

Those eligible for this support must:

- be a farmer or land manager
- be located within the SouthWest region (Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Dorset and the Isles of Scilly)
- be a Basic Payment Scheme claimant
- have an SBI number

For full details of the support and to register on any of the workshops please visit BIP's website businessinfopoint.co.uk/ffr/ or call 0800 592 872.



CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR planning

To assist us with our production & transport planning we would appreciate your orders in by:

Thursday 15th December for Pre-Christmas Delivery

Thursday 22nd December for Pre New Year Delivery

We will be manufacturing throughout the festive period, however the office will be closed on bank holidays. On these occasions please contact your representative for assistance.

Glad tidings to all!