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YOUR NEWSLETTER FROM CREDITON MILLING COMPANY

Good to be in the South West

Well congratulations Crediton! That'll be Crediton Dairy, not Crediton Milling for the purposes of this article as it finished top of the milk price league table in 2023, paying an average standard litre price of just over 40p compared to the average across all processors of just over 38p. Muller wasn't so far away from Crediton Dairy, but Arla was well down the pack with an average of 37.5p.

period. That can be viewed as a positive, of course, but a stable period of prices below the cost of production isn't positive, and it is this fact which I think should, in theory, keep milk volumes in check and help to increase milk prices.

However there is a double bout of unfavourable events that look as if they could keep the lid on price increases for some – at the moment demand is still extremely weak as a result of the high consumer prices, and milk volumes are seemingly increasing in Europe! This isn't just UK volumes, those in France and Germany are also on the rise, perhaps stimulated by a €3.3/100kg increase in the milk price since September. UK volumes had increased above last year during December, but fell back last week again. The combination is painting a picture that is much harder to read than last year, and the net effect is that end use buyers aren't overly worried about future supplies, and thus aren't that active in the market, while processors have few ace cards in their hands

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DAIRY



Chris Walkland

WP Walkland Partnership

The big question now is whether 2024 prices will top 2023's. Arla has started the year off well with a big increase that puts it back on top of the table for January, and the first two GDT auctions of the year have been positive (although not by much) so that's a good start too.

Last year was easy to read, and this time last year it had become apparent that milk prices were going to be in for a torrid time and that several rounds of reductions were on the cards. But this year is harder to read (so far!), and it looks as if we're in for a more stable

DAIRY

POULTRY

BEEF & SHEEP

FORAGE

Good to be in the South West *continued from page 1*

DAIRY on which to bid up prices. Hence the rather slow and steady start to the year (so far!) But commodity prices are stable, and the likes of cheese is edging up – more good news, therefore.

I said at the Semex conference that farmgate prices would probably be higher than current prices for “most farmers”. The definition of “most” being those getting prices in the mid 30p range, which the majority of processors are currently paying, as opposed to those in the 36 – 37p zone where Crediton is. I also said

that I don't have 40p on my radar just yet, and when I run my figures the commodity price returns, the GDT auction, and the futures prices all equate to a milk price that's still in the mid 36p – 38p range. In other words there's nothing that points to a material change in milk prices for those getting the higher prices anytime soon. Maybe for those lower down the table (and we have seen this for January and February with several increases), but perhaps not for those at the top just yet. However IFCN (a

partner company to Kite) is predicting 40p prices for June and July, so it is a tad more optimistic than me. I hope for farmer's sakes that it is right, and I am wrong!



Beyond The Gate



MATT HOLMES 07751 743079
RUMINANT SPECIALIST

For our most recent Beyond The Gate (BTG) meeting we headed to Stuart Partners just outside of Exeter where members were able to have an in-depth insight into their ad lib beef finishing unit and agricultural contracting business.

BEEF & SHEEP Fifty-nine farmer members of the group travelled from across the Southwest on a very cold January morning to learn more about the Stuarts business as well as a talk on the costings side of the beef finishing enterprise and how it stacks up commercially.

We explored the pros and cons of ad lib beef finishing with four key take home messages for the members to take

back to their own business'...

Keep things simple – Regardless of your farming system, simplicity can see huge increases in efficiencies where time and labour are concerned.

Keep machinery costs as low as possible – Understandably this is very dependent on each farms individual circumstance but a focus on investing capital or loans on livestock that hopefully increase in value rather than new machinery which depreciates over time is key, especially where interest rates are currently to.

An ad lib beef system could be managed by one person with a small loader tractor and straw chopper (I would advise one with a good heater on mornings like these though)

Making sure you are buying the right animals for your system and

paying the right money in the first place is where your money is earned, regular weighing will help monitor performance to ensure cattle remain profitable.

Transition – When an animal comes on the farm it needs to be eased onto an ad lib ration to ensure no rumen acidosis is incurred. Very rarely will you have a full history of that animal's diet to date, so a transition phase of 2 weeks is optimal although I appreciate the practicality of this is not always realistic.

A big thank you to all of the team at Stuart Partners for welcoming the BTG members onto the farm, for all who attended it was a very thought-provoking meeting and the cattle were a credit to all involved.



Preparing for lambing 2024

BEEF & SHEEP

The weather has finally changed to something more seasonal and a bit drier (for now at least) but a lot of farms are now thinking about lambing or have already started. Making sure your ewes are in the best condition possible is very important for many reasons, this starts back in the summer/autumn when the rams go in.



The ewes need to maintain this condition throughout pregnancy, whilst the weather changes into winter, the grass stops growing and the ewes requirements increase as their pregnancy develops. Therefore, it is vital that the right level of energy, protein, trace vitamins and minerals are provided to meet the ewe and her growing lambs demand.

A ewe carrying twins has double the energy and protein requirement during the later stages of pregnancy than that of an empty ewe. This is due to the fact that 70% of the lambs growth occurs in the last 6 weeks, as well as the development of her udder and colostrum production.

Meeting the ewes nutritional requirements correctly during the later stages of pregnancy will pay dividends when she lambs. Resulting in a more natural lambing, good lamb vigour, high quality and quantity of good colostrum and then good milk production.

The exact feed requirements of ewes

need to be worked out, depending on the forage or grass/forage crop available (we can help with analysing forage), ewes condition, weight of ewes (maintenance requirements vary a lot with breed/size), the number of lambs being carried.

Therefore, pregnancy scanning is a very important job, this should be carried out ideally 80-90 days into pregnancy. This allows for better management of the ewe flock, ewes can be separated depending on lambing dates, number of lambs carried and body condition if necessary.

Planning at this stage is also very important to ensure you have enough space for each ewe to feed and drink properly and safely, this may vary each year depending on the number of ewes carrying different numbers of lambs. This should always be worked out as though you are about to start lambing and the ewes are at their biggest.

As the lambs grow inside the ewes they will naturally take up more space,

reducing the ewes capacity to eat, as this is happening we need to make sure the nutrient density of the complete ration can keep pace to maintain the growing requirements of the ewe and her lambs, supplementary feeding should gradually be increased, especially with ewes carrying multiple lambs.

For those lambing indoors other things which need considering pre lambing will include, preparing the shed/s in time, straw/bedding supply, staff requirements, stocking up with equipment and supplies, making sure mothering pens are set up and easy to use, biosecurity between sheep, somewhere for orphan/surplus lambs, where ewes and lambs are to be moved once mothered up and strong enough.

If you would like to check your feeding plan or even create new one then please give me a shout.



DAVE SMALL 07711 780858
RUMINANT SPECIALIST



Beyond The Gate (BTG) with Stuart Partners

E coli in laying hens



LIZ WARNER
POULTRY SPECIALIST

Our fields team are seeing increasing incidence of e-coli in poultry during their visits to farm, so we felt it topical to include some information. The article below is included thanks to *Hendrix Genetics*.



when the carcasses are fresh. Egg yolk peritonitis smells like boiled eggs.

The diagnose must be confirmed by bacteriology from bone marrow.

Typical signs of egg yolk peritonitis caused by E coli

Treatment and control

Control on viral respiratory diseases and mycoplasmas, on gut health and stress factors (draught!) will make the birds less susceptible for E coli infections. Vaccinations with commercial vaccines or autogenous vaccines can support this.

Drinking water sanitation also is important.

Antibiotic treatment may be feasible, but care must be taken because of the potential withdrawal time on the eggs. Veterinary advice must be sought.

An alternative is treatment with organic acids or Chlorin.

POULTRY Escherichia coli is in laying hens the biggest reason of mortality worldwide. The poultry disease is described as colibacillosis, colisepticemia/ bacteraemia, E. coli peritonitis syndrome (EPS), salpingitis/ peritonitis/ salpingoperitonitis (SPS) and coligranuloma's.

We leave the discussion about pathogenicity to the scientists. For us, every E coli outside of the intestine, but inside of the body cavity of a layer, is a pathogenic one. E coli is not a problem, if it stays where it belongs, in the gut.

E coli can be a primary pathogen, when the infection pressure is high, from heavily contaminated drinking water systems or, in alternative housing systems, from high levels of dust (= dried manure). Most times, E coli is a secondary pathogen. The door is opened by viral infections, by high levels of ammonia or by problems with the gut wall integrity, caused by dysbacteriosis/enteritis.

Stress can also make layers susceptible for disease. Production stress and stress related to ventilation failures (draught!) are the most important ones.

Clinical signs

Acute mortality without any other clinical signs in healthy, good performing flocks, can be a sign of colisepticemia.

Airsacculitis, coligranulomas and upclimbing infections of the oviduct, can cause more chronic mortality. Birds will show small combs with blue points and are sick. They die from dehydration.

Egg yolk peritonitis in young production flocks and egg concrements in the oviduct in older layers, are not primary caused by E coli infections.

Diagnosis

See clinical signs. Post-mortem varies from almost no pathology to polyserositis. Birds dying from E coli have a bad smell, when opened, even

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