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TOMORROW'S FARMER



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YOUR NEWSLETTER FROM CREDITON MILLING COMPANY

Elevating Transition Cow Management with Protected Choline and Methionine

Transition periods in dairy farming, notably the weeks surrounding calving, are critical junctures where the well-being of cows can be precarious. Employing nutritional advancements such as protected choline and methionine supplements in your dry cow feeds can be a groundbreaking approach in transition cow management.

Here, we explore how these supplements can significantly enhance the health and productivity of transition cows.

Improving Liver Function and Reducing Fatty Liver Syndrome

Transition cows often experience an increase in fat mobilisation, which, if not managed correctly, can lead to fatty liver syndrome. Protected choline plays a vital role in lipid metabolism. It helps to reduce the accumulation of lipids in the liver, promoting better liver function and reducing the incidence of fatty liver

syndrome, a common issue during the transition period. Consequently, a healthy liver ensures that the cow can metabolize nutrients efficiently, thus aiding in a smoother transition phase.

Boosting Milk Production

Protected methionine, a vital amino acid, is crucial in optimising milk production. Incorporating protected methionine in the diets of transition cows helps in enhancing the synthesis of proteins necessary for milk production. Furthermore, methionine aids in improving the overall milk

quality by influencing the composition of milk protein and fat. Thus, integrating protected methionine into transition cow management strategies can be a significant step towards achieving optimal milk production post-calving.

Strengthening Immunity

Transition cows are susceptible to various infections and diseases due to the physiological changes occurring during this period. Both protected choline and methionine play a role in strengthening the immunity of cows. *continued on page 2*

DAIRY

POULTRY

BEEF & SHEEP

FORAGE

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Choline is essential for the formation of phospholipids, which are vital components of cell membranes, enhancing the structural integrity and functionality of cells. Meanwhile, methionine is a precursor to other amino acids such as cysteine, which is crucial in the synthesis of glutathione, a potent antioxidant that safeguards cells from oxidative damage. Consequently, supplementing transition cows with these nutrients can bolster their immune response, helping to keep infections at bay.

Enhancing Reproductive Performance

The period surrounding calving is also a time when future reproductive performance is moulded. Protected choline and methionine have been associated with improved reproductive outcomes. Choline assists in reducing the incidence of metabolic disorders that can adversely affect reproductive performance. Meanwhile, methionine aids in better embryonic development and survival, setting the stage for successful subsequent pregnancies. Hence, these supplements can be instrumental in improving the reproductive efficiency of dairy herds, ensuring sustained productivity.



Mitigating Stress and Promoting Well-Being

Transition periods are inherently stressful for cows. The physiological changes, coupled with the altered nutrient demands, can exert considerable stress on cows. Supplementation with protected choline and methionine can help in mitigating this stress. These nutrients aid in the optimal functioning of various metabolic pathways, ensuring that the cows can adapt to the changing nutritional landscape without undue stress, promoting overall well-being.

In the pursuit of revolutionising transition cow management, the role of protected choline and methionine emerges as a

beacon of innovation and efficiency. By enhancing liver function, boosting milk production, strengthening immunity, and improving reproductive performance, these supplements stand as pillars in crafting a successful transition period strategy. Furthermore, their role in mitigating stress cannot be overlooked, fostering a conducive environment for cows to thrive during this critical period. For more information about the **dry cow pro range** please give us a call.



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Farming with Reduced Nitrogen Input and Humber Palmer Fertilisers

In the ever-evolving sphere of agriculture, sustainability and environmental conservation have become focal points. A crucial strategy in achieving this is reducing long-term nitrogen inputs and employing products such as Humber Palmer fertilisers. In this article, we explore the advantages of reducing nitrogen inputs and why incorporating nutrient planing and balancing to sustainable farming, has many benefits.

1. Improving Soil Health

Long-term usage of excessive nitrogen fertilisers often degrades soil structure and natural fertility. Lowering nitrogen inputs in conjunction with organic manures, composts and products designed to aid biological activity, can help restore and maintain the organic content of the soil, fostering a thriving ecosystem of beneficial microorganisms, which plays a pivotal role in soil health and crop yield sustainability.

2. Safeguarding Water Bodies

It sounds obvious but excessive nitrogen run-off from agricultural lands is a primary

contributor to water pollution, giving rise to problems like eutrophication but just as importantly this cost money. Careful choice of fertiliser and timing of application can aid in reducing nitrogen leaching into water bodies, as this will allow alignment with the plant's uptake, thereby minimising wastage and the consequent water pollution.

3. Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The excessive use of nitrogen fertilisers is known to release harmful greenhouse gases like nitrous oxide into the atmosphere. By reducing nitrogen inputs and opting for environmentally friendly

products like Humber Palmer fertilisers, which are formulated to minimise gas emissions, the agricultural sector can significantly cut down its carbon footprint, taking a step forward in the global fight against climate change.

4. Promoting Biodiversity

A reduction in nitrogen input can help foster a diverse ecosystem by preventing the dominance of nitrogen-loving plant species, which often suppress the growth of other species. This is particularly relevant if you are looking to promote clovers or herbal leys on your farm.

5. Maximising organic manures

Utilisation of products available on farm has to be the answer going forward, ironically the more we rely on artificial nitrogen the more the N cycle is slowed down or broken. So using the correct application type and timings as well product treatments ensure we are getting the most from what we already have.

A steady pathway to improvement?

My last article for Crediton Milling was written back in May. How things have changed! Back then my average non-aligned milk price, weighted across milk volumes on a processor basis, was just over 37p – which was already down 10p from January!

Now, though, the average is 34.7p, although several processors in the South West are paying more than this. Crediton is at 37p, Muller is just under that including a B price allowance. Liquid processors are paying significantly more than cheesemakers at the moment on a standard litre basis, at just over 36p compared to 34.6p. It is rare indeed for liquid processors to consistently pay more than the cheesemakers, but that is where we are today. This is largely because the liquid sector is more insulated from global markets than, say, the butter-powder and cheese markets and have more money in their supply chain from the £1.45p for four pints retail milk price. Although this is down from its peak of £1.65 it is still well up on the £1.15 price that we have seen for years.

Butter, powder and cheese, though, are impacted by global markets and supply and demand factors in play there, as well as domestic ones.

Take cheese. The domestic market is in a muddle for a number of reasons, including poor demand on the back of inflated retail prices, strong supply, big stocks and expensive storage costs. Prices are low at £3300/t for mild cheddar – converting to no more than a 33p milk price, therefore.

But it is also impacted by butter and SMP prices too, because when the prices of those are low (as they are now) processors who have the factory options to make all three products will move milk out of butter and SMP and into cheese. The supply of that will increase, and prices fall further. Thus while liquid milk is insulated in the UK, cheese generally isn't, although in the UK

the cheddar market is less exposed than, say, gouda and mozzarella because of specific recipes, maturation times and consumer demand for British.

Processors selling butter and SMP on the commodity markets, are most exposed. This is a global world, fully exposed to supply and demand forces. And unfortunately, right now there is too much supply of dairy products and not enough demand. Consequently stocks of butter and SMP have built and prices have fallen. Despite the UK being outside of the EU our prices are impacted by those, as well as those in the southern hemisphere. That's because many traders buying in bulk aren't particularly fussed where they get their product from ("butter is butter") and if prices were much cheaper from New Zealand, then countries or companies will import from there, instead of from here. Our prices have to fall in line to compete. Currently butter and powder convert to a farmgate price of around 26p.

As ever, though, life in reality is not as simple as I've just stated. That's because the degree to which we are exposed to the global market generally depends on our milk volumes - when they are plentiful there is a much closer relationship to world market prices than when volumes are low, as other factors then come into play like competition for milk. Currently volumes are plentiful and our exposure to global factors is high. What we really need is for volumes to fall, and demand to rise.

On that front anecdotal comment from retailers suggests that domestic demand

nature to maintain soil health and fertility, highlighting a move towards a more holistic and sustainable approach to farming and enabling us to meet the targets of our milk buyers and other customers.

In the quest for a sustainable future in agriculture, the reduction of nitrogen inputs paired with the utilisation of innovative products, will enable us to



Chris Walkland
Walkland Partnership

might not be as bad as it was, with retail prices for some dairy products falling. So this might improve demand here.

But global demand for dairy is still poor, particularly in China as its own milk production volumes are good, and its economy is struggling. Generally speaking, if Chinese imports are poor then the GDT results are bad, sentiment is subdued, and prices are low – especially when twinned with very healthy global milk volumes. This is exactly what we are seeing now.

The question is, then, how long will these low prices last for? Well although there are signs that the commodity market may have bottomed out the mood is finely balanced, and it is hard to find anyone who thinks that commodity prices will lift significantly anytime soon. They might lift a bit, but they need to rise a lot to put several pence on your milk prices, which is what you need. Chinese imports are still poor, and so too are prices. The GDT auction has had a bad run recently, but the last two events have increased, so that's a positive. However, it has to lift for many months yet, and by a significant degree, and no one can see that happening until China returns to the market.

In addition, the Dutch butter price is up for three consecutive weeks, which is another positive; traders are reporting higher bids and offers for butter for Q4, and EU milk volumes might be falling, so I do think the worst might be over for the commodity markets and that they could now be on a steady pathway to improvement. I sincerely hope so anyway!

6. Encouraging Sustainable Practices and improving efficiency

Adopting a strategy that includes reduced nitrogen input and the use of balanced fertilisers like Humber Palmer can foster a shift towards sustainable farming practices. It encourages farmers to adopt methods such as crop rotation and cover cropping, which work synergistically with

meet the challenging balance between maintaining output and reducing environmental impact. The process of sustainable intensification is a journey that our team is happy to join you on.



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FORAGE SPECIALIST

The importance of water

Water is one vital resource, who's quality and composition we can sometimes overlook when discussing the health and production of our hens. An egg is 90% water, and a laying hen will consume 1.8 times more water than she will of feed. Water is the biggest intake of any of the constituents of her diet, and is critical to the performance of our hens.

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Making sure potable water is brought into the shed is probably the easiest bit. Although this water should be regularly tested prior to entering the shed, and treated if necessary. Once the water is inside the shed, it flows slowly through the lines, warming up to a temperature that any bacteria present can multiply and thrive, and Biofilm can form.

Biofilms are microcolonies of bacterial cells, encased in a polysaccharide matrix (the slime). These attach to the insides of your drinker lines, and continue to develop due to the perfect conditions present within the shed.

These biofilms are difficult to prevent, unless you have a robust water quality control routine, as with the bacteria encased in the film, the film provides the bacteria with protection from the disinfectant and allows them to grow rapidly, and with these biofilms containing such bacteria as E. Coli, Pseudomonas, Enterococcus and Staphylococcus, that is not concurrent to a healthy, productive flock, if they are

consuming 1.8 times more of this water, than they are of their feed. This will create a big challenge and stress for your hens.

If water intake is allowing a bacterial challenge direct access to your birds, her immune system will be working harder, and her resources will be focussed on overcoming the challenge, rather than maximising egg production.

So, with these biofilms not responding to some disinfectants, how can we go about minimising biofilm problems in our flocks?

As well as regularly testing your intake water before it reaches your shed, we should also be regularly testing the water from the end of the lines. This gives a great indication as to whether our routine water care program is effective.

Whilst weekly flushing of the entire system is beneficial, lines should be flushed at least daily. This fast flowing water helping to draw out any bacteria or biofilm starting to form, before it becomes too established.

Flushing lines daily, will also immediately provide you with a visual indication of how your water looks at the end of the lines, is it clear and clean looking, or slightly cloudy with parts of biofilm present?



There are many different products available for cleaning your drinking systems, both at terminal clean, and during the production stage. With products containing acetic acid and hydrogen peroxide, chlorine, organic acids and inorganic acids. The key is to be very aware of the dosage rates, and the analysis of the water you are dosing. When using products which alter the pH of the water, you need to be regularly checking the pH of the water within the lines, as the hens will not drink water that is too acidic.

It may also be prudent to change the active ingredient periodically.

In all cases, when establishing a suitable cleaning regime, we would advise you to discuss it with your poultry vet.



LIZ WARNER
POULTRY SPECIALIST

SILOSOLVE FOR MAIZE

WE HAVE STOCK IN THE MILL FOR THOSE LAST MINUTE REQUIREMENTS...

Using **Silosolve** can aid losses in the pit and potentially give up to 8% more tonnes through reduced dry matter losses. Other benefits are Yeast reduction of 98%, Mould reduction of 94%. These reductions deliver cold, high feed value silage. Less risk of mycotoxin production, less feed waste at feed out and 11% improvement in starch digestibility for extra milk production.



MANEUVER LAGOON SLURRY INOCULANT

Maneuver Lagoon is a next generation slurry inoculant which tackles Crusting, Foaming and Gases. It utilises naturally occurring bacteria that double every 10 minutes to reduce odour and undesirable gases.

Nitrogen that would normally be lost, is bound to the bacteria saving up to 70% that is then released slowly into the soil and crops it is spread on. Correctly stored and applied slurry inoculant can be a cost-effective way of nutrient management, getting more from what you have.

Why not give your slurry an MOT this winter?