

## Spring Feeding - 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024

At this time of the year the focus is on setting the herd up for a successful breeding season and achieving a good peak milk production in the weeks ahead.

From an overall co-op point of view, we can see proteins are dropping. The main factor driving protein in milk is energy intake. Low protein in milk is indicating that the energy intake of the cows is low. The high relative fat percentage is also indicating this i.e. cows with a low protein and high fat are milking off their back.

Maintaining cow condition and performance in the short term until weather settles will have a positive effect on the rest of the lactation.

### What to do now?

Ensure you are feeding an appropriate level of concentrate for the situation you are in:

*Table 1 - Suggested spring feeding levels (kgs concentrates) based on diet & milk production.*

Daily yield litres (l)	22.5 l	25 l	27.5 l	30 l
Grass by day	4 kgs	5 kgs	6 kgs	7 kgs
Grass (on/off, 2-3 hours grazing only)	5 kgs	6 kgs	7 kgs	8 kgs
Full time silage	6 kgs	7 kgs	8 kgs	9 kgs

### Reducing silage stocks or poor-quality silage:

If worried about silage stocks or silage quality, getting as much grass into cows as possible is the top priority. Where this isn't practical because of weather other solutions can be used to reduce silage consumption or to help boost poor quality silage.

These options are farm specific and will require a discussion with the Mill or your advisor. One such option includes increasing the daily concentrate feeding to 10kgs with an out of parlour feed.

See Table 2 below for example:

*Table 2 – High concentrate diet*

High Concentrate Diet	
Morning Parlour Feed	3.5kgs
Out of parlour midday feed (noon -2pm) or late-night feed 7-9.30 pm)	3.0kgs
Evening Parlour Feed	3.5kgs

Where silage quality is poor, maize meal could be used as the midday feed or where silage is scarce, higher fibre diets such as the forage extender or general-purpose beef mix would be a safer feed with minimum forage.

**For more information on any of the above please contact your advisor or Donal Murphy / Shane Buckley in the Mill on 028 30500**