



## MOLASSES BLENDS FOR COST-EFFECTIVE DIETS THIS WINTER

**Looking after the rumen bugs will be vital to get the most from grass silage and help keep costs under control this winter so it will pay to take a closer look at feeding molasses.**

This year's first and second cut grass silages are coming back with higher NDF and lignin contents than usual, making the forage more difficult to digest in the rumen. At the same time, they are lower in the rapidly fermentable carbohydrates needed to feed the fibre digesting bacteria.

Together this means diets will need more fermentable metabolisable energy in supplements. In addition, silages are low in Rumen Fermentable proteins which means nitrogen efficiency and protein sources will be important.

### **New research**

Against this background and with cereal prices high, we believe farmers should consider using molasses blends containing Regulated Release proteins as a cost-effective and efficient way to improve rumen health and forage utilisation.

New trials at the University of Reading supported by liquid feed specialists ED&F Man show the benefits of feeding molasses.

In the trial, mid-lactation cows were fed diets where up to 40% of the rape and soya was replaced with Regumaize 44, a 44% protein, 55% sugar, high protein molasses blend, but leaving the total dry matter feed the same.

The change in the diet-maintained milk yields and butterfat, while milk protein was increased from 3.62% to 3.71% due to the extra fermentable metabolisable energy in the Regumaize 44.

At today's prices, the diet including Regumaize 44 saves nearly £5000 over the winter for a 200-cow herd. For farmers on a constituent-based contract the additional milk protein would help support milk prices too.

While we would never recommend a total switch from conventional protein to a high protein molasses blend as this would compromise the total protein balance in the

diet, a partial replacement could help reduce the impact of rising prices.

Adding a molasses blend to the diet has been a simple and effective way for Dave Bailey from Hilltop Farm, Bradworthy to increase milk constituents while feeding less protein to his herd of all year-round calving Holstein cows which average 11,300 litres at 4.35% fat and 3.3% protein.

### **Simple system**

Selling milk on a Saputo contract means high milk quality is important to get the best price. Dave is an advocate of keeping things simple with grass silage fed in ring feeders and cake in the parlour so there was limited scope to try anything new.

He is a great believer in 'filling them up and lying them down', so wants cows to eat quickly and then lie down to ruminate and maximise production.

In the autumn of 2020, Dave agreed to add Regumaize 44 to the diet to increase sugar levels to try and stimulate the rumen. The blend was delivered into IBCs meaning it

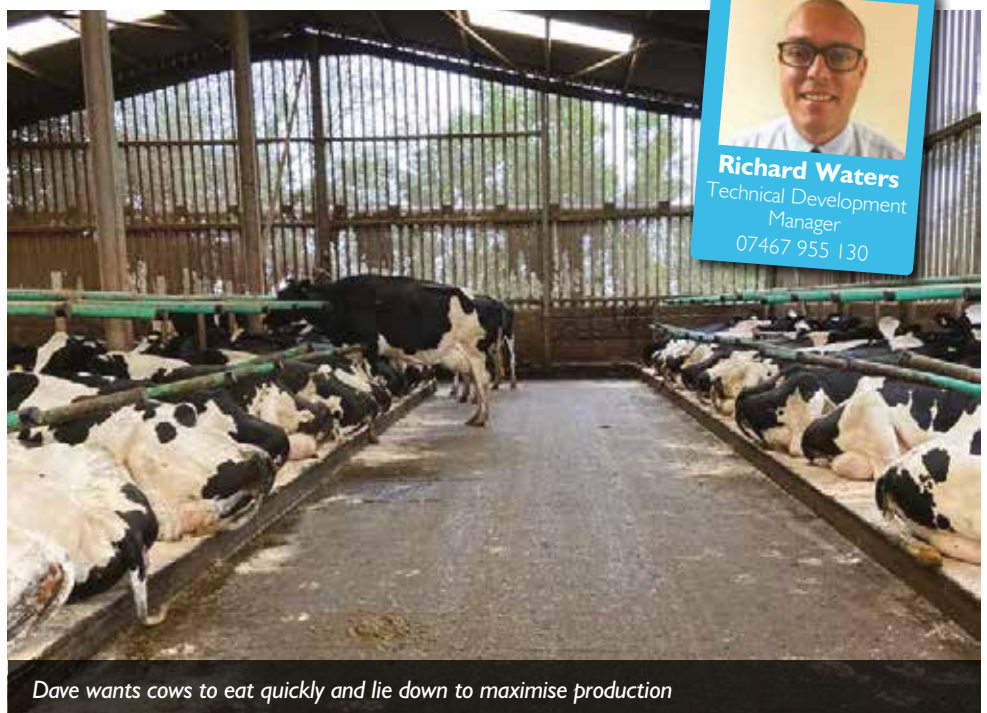
could be easily added to the diet, Dave simply tips 1.5kg/cow of Regumaize 44 over the silage before letting the cows back into feed. Milk quality for the winter was the best ever. This is something which is very much needed on his Saputo contract and with feed prices generally increasing.

Dave had been feeding an 18% compound in the parlour but Regumaize 44 helped with not only sugar, but also base diet protein content. This has allowed him to switch to a 16% compound throughout the winter, helping keep a tight rein on feed costs.

Dave has kept feeding Regumaize this summer when cows were paddock grazing, pouring it on the grass silage buffer feed and is all set up to feed it right through the winter.

Molasses blends can be easily incorporated into most feeding systems, being quickly and easily added to the diet and could play a big part in maintaining margins this winter.

**Talk to your Feed Specialist about including a molasses blend in your diet.**



*Dave wants cows to eat quickly and lie down to maximise production*

# Farming thoughts

We have now launched our Autumn/Winter prices. As you would have read in the farming press, nothing seems to want to drop in price at the moment with raw materials generally increasing alongside rises in fuel costs.

Milk volumes are dropping as we speak and will come under enormous pressure as cows come off high protein autumn grass. It will be important to keep cows milking efficiently this winter and monitor costs closely.

I've said many-a-time, it's not the cows' fault the price of feed and fertiliser is high. She still has the same energy and protein requirements. My advice this winter, is to feed them properly until PD +, and then we will try and challenge them off this winter's forage.

With grass silage clamps full to the brim, but with much lower quality than normal, we've launched our new Glycogenic range of feeds to help make the most of silages, alongside our Precision mixes and the new RumenoBoost molasses blend. Speak to your Feed Specialist and get those clamps tested now and then test them regularly so we can fine-tune your diets as required.

Over the course of the summer we have caught up with a lot of training with our staff. This shows the commitment we have to you, our customers.

We are investing heavily into our fleet of haulage vehicles and currently have two young people away taking their HGV tests to help make sure we are well covered for drivers and are not adversely affected by the driver shortage.

I can reassure you all, we are doing our best to keep our service first class, which is what you expect from us.

We are delighted with the turnout of Holsworthy Industrial Estate Open Day, where we raised over £1000 for Devon and Cornwall Air Ambulance.



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## GRAINS AND STRAIGHTS UPDATE

As I am writing this the UK cereal harvest is coming to a close and normally this is when we have harvest pressure, but unfortunately this hasn't happened. After the USDA report in August, cereal prices rallied on the back of a reduction in global wheat crops.

This was predominantly Russia, losing 12.5 million tonnes and Canada losing 7.5 million tonnes. This sent wheat prices to £190/t ex-farm and since then wheat has been within £10 of this.

The UK wheat harvest is likely to be reduced to around 14 million tonnes. Barley quality remains exceptional which is not good for the feed trade as a lot of barley is making malting quality, reducing the amount available for feed. The gap between wheat and barley is narrowing to around £8/t.

With cereals firming, co-products have increased on the back of this. Products including sugar beet, wheat gluten and wheatfeed have all increased in price, making ingredients very firm.

Sugar beet remains very attractive against soya hulls at around a £5/t premium, albeit they both remain very expensive, trading in the '2 teens'.

Unusually soya prices remain quite stable, trading £10/t either side of £355/t for some time. We are now watching the US harvest

progress, but the reality is that the downside has to be limited. We all know what soya can do, so it would be prudent to have at least 50% cover.

We are seeing issues with distillers with limited availability of wheat distillers. Ensus, the only UK ethanol plant has been down for maintenance and Vivergo isn't scheduled to start until 2022.

Hurricane Ida, in the US has also caused issues. Reports suggest several barges sank and there is widespread damage to ports with broken elevators, meaning delays are likely.

Closer to home, logistical problems are likely to cause disruption throughout the winter. Plymouth and Teignmouth docks will be increasingly important to us as longer hauls are becoming increasingly difficult. By maximising lorry loads this will make haulage as efficient as possible.

**If you would like to talk through any of these points, please do not hesitate to contact us.**



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## BEEF FINISHING THIS WINTER

As encouraged as we all are by the high price of finished cattle, now is the time to make your plans for winter finishing.

Any cattle over or around 400kgs should be started on a transition diet before housing in October. Cattle at the moment are really looking for dry matter to go with highly digestible autumn grass, so put out a round feeder per 12 cattle and use your most palatable and dry round bale haylage or hay if you have it. If you can start concentrate feeding 1-2kg now, this can really help.

The rumen has to adjust from processing 15%DM grass to a 50-70%DM winter ration. A whole new set of microbes will be needed and providing some starch and sugar will begin this process.

The next step is to get your main winter forages analysed, so we can build a ration to suit your type of cattle, make best use of your forages and your home grown cereals if you have them.

We can also build in maize and wholecrop silages. We are already seeing high fibre and low energy levels in many grass silages.

It may pay to use Levucell yeast to improve digestion and increase meat yield by up to 6%. The addition of Regumaize 44 will provide protein and sugar to stimulate rumen fermentation.

I have calculated two example rations. The first uses silage cut in May and the second uses a June silage.

Both of these diets will work but note the difference in cost that IMJ difference in the silage makes to the diet cost. We are finding that Regumaize 44 is the best value liquid/protein feed available for all types of diets including maize, wholecrop or grass silage in mixed ration situations. If you are feeding silage direct and feeding this concentrate mix separately, we will need to formulate the tailored ration accordingly.

**Speak to your Feed Specialist to get your silage analysed and your ration constructed in good time.**



**Bill Harper**  
Director  
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	10 ME Silage Finishing Ration (Kgs)	11 ME Silage Finishing Ration (Kgs)
Grass Silage 10 ME	25	-
Grass Silage 11 ME	-	25
Regumaize 44	1.25	0.7
Rolled Barley	5	1
25% Beef Balancer Mix/Nuts	2	2
Cost (£/head/day)	1.80	0.96

## LOOKING AT THINGS DIFFERENTLY ON FARM

**Our goal at Harpers Feeds is to help you get the best from your herd, using the latest techniques and approaches.**

Taking a close look at the cows can tell you a great deal about how they are really performing and how your facilities may be holding them back. Recently our whole sales team attended a cow signals training course with Joep Driessen, the world renowned expert in this area. We can now give one to one training on farm to help you look at your farm 'through the eye of a cow.'

The fundamental building blocks for a healthy, efficient herd which will allow you to get better production per lactation and more lactations from your cows are:

- ✓ Feed
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Light
- ✓ Air
- ✓ Rest
- ✓ Space

Cow Signals is a structured approach to assessing how well your system provides these building blocks. On any farm there will be things that can be changed, often quickly that can lead to an increase in performance and cow welfare. It could be feed access, lying times, lameness issues or achieving a stress-free calving time to enable the best transition possible for fresh cows. Find out what your challenges are and you will be on the road to better performance.

**Talk to your Feed Specialist about how a Cow Signals assessment can benefit your herd.**



**Alex Cornish**  
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## GETTING CALVES OFF TO A FLYING START



**Louise Hosegood**  
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**Changing to Energized Calf Milk is a decision that the Cawsey family, who run a herd of 180 Holstein Friesians at Sutcombe near Holsworthy, are pleased they made.**

Energized Calf Milk uses whole milk as a biological reference and as a result has higher fat and lower protein than most milk replacers. As fats contain twice the energy of carbohydrates, such as lactose, it is important that milk replacers have a high fat content.

Both the energy and protein in cow's milk are far more digestible than those found in widely available milk replacers. Using a combination of vegetable oils including coconut and palm oil, Energized Calf Milk replicates the fat profile in cow's milk creating an exceptional level of digestibility. It also only contains proteins from dairy sources as these are more digestible and better suited to pre-weaned calves than vegetable proteins such as linseed and soya.

Energized Calf Milk has 10% higher ME content than a typical milk replacer. This is a big increase in energy, helping to exploit the exceptional growth potential of pre-weaned calves while ensuring sufficient energy to allow the calves to build strong organs and an effective immune system.

The Cawsey's herd, which average 9400 litres, calve all year round with all black and white calves reared on milk replacer

with a system designed to produce strong, healthy calves.

The calves are bucket fed and in addition are fed a Harpers 16% Calf Rearing Nut with DeccoX to reduce the risk of coccidiosis. Calves are weaned when brothers Alistair and Anthony, and Anthony's son Jack believe the calves are strong enough, usually around 10 weeks old.

They changed to Energizer Calf Milk just over a year ago as they were looking for more consistent growth. Calves move onto the powder immediately after receiving colostrum and are fed 2.5 litres of replacer twice a day at a concentration of 150g/litre. Previously they had used a skim milk product but had problems getting it to mix well.

The Cawseys have been really pleased they made the change. They say the milk powder is incredibly consistent and results in a well-mixed feed the calves take to very well. Calves grow really well and seem very healthy. They have seen fewer cases of scouring and less pneumonia which they put down to the stronger immune system. They say the difference in calves is like day and night.

**If you want a calf to grow well, feed the product that has evolved to meet their requirements. Talk to your Feed Specialist about how Energized Calf Milk will get your calves off to a flying start.**

# FINISHING LAMBS TO GET THE BEST RETURNS

**Now is the time to re-assess your finishing plans to get the best returns from lambs this autumn and winter and make the most of the current strong prices we have seen in the sheep industry.**

Assessing grass and feed availability heading into the winter will allow you to make decisions that will not only get the best returns from the lambs you have left, but also make sure your breeding flock is not compromised in terms of grazing.

## GRASS FINISHING

Finishing lambs on grazing is an option, provided the grass isn't required for the breeding ewes. However, as grass quality declines heading into the Autumn/Winter or grazing conditions become worse, daily liveweight gain will start to drop off and it will take longer to finish lambs unless supplementary feeds are used. If lambs are put out on keep on near-by farms, this cost should also be added in when calculating returns.

## ROOT/FORAGE CROPS

Root and forage crops can be a cost-effective way of finishing lambs pre- and post-Christmas. Crops should be strip-grazed to limit wastage. Make sure to feed some structural fibre such as hay or haylage to maintain rumen health and improve utilization of the forage crop. Feeding a concentrate such as our 15% Lamb Finisher or 14% Prime Finisher Nuts will help ensure higher daily liveweight gain, and allow stocking rates to be increased if required.



## INDOOR FINISHED LAMBS

This system can be used to finish large numbers of lambs in a relatively short time period and give the grazing platform time to recover for the spring or ewe grazing. Lambs entering an ad-lib system should be gradually built up over a 10–14-day period.

Once lambs are eating continuously, don't let feeders become empty for long periods. This will reduce the risk of lambs overeating when feeders are re-filled. Lambs also require access to long forage, so either bed generously or feed straw or hay in racks with plenty of feed space.

Splitting lambs into two groups is always an option. Lambs that still need to grow a frame can do so outside, and then just house the lambs that have the desired frame but need the adequate level of finish.

## FINISHING CONCENTRATES

Products such as Lamb Finisher and Prime Lamb offer a palatable and balanced feed, with the correct balance of starch and sugars for optimal performance. High levels of digestible fibre support the rumen for optimal growth rates on grazed systems, forage crops and indoor housed systems.

All our Lamb finishing concentrates contain a unique mixture of cereals and other energy sources. Ammonia chloride is included as standard to prevent Urinary Calculi.

**Speak to your Feed Specialist about our range of lamb finishing concentrates and the best way to manage your lambs to maximise returns.**



**Matt Dymond**  
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## EU GRANT AID

**In recent months we have been given the opportunity to install new equipment to help the efficiency and performance of the mill.**

A BOA, which is a type of conditioner and a double deck cooler will be installed on one of our press lines. This will increase durability of the nuts but also increase efficiency and performance. We have also been able to increase our power supply to the mill.

This investment has been part funded by the EU through the Feed Manufacturing Development Project.

## MILL CLOSURE

**Our mill will be closed between Friday 15th and Monday 18th October to fit a new transformer. Please make sure you have plenty of feed in the lead up to this.**

