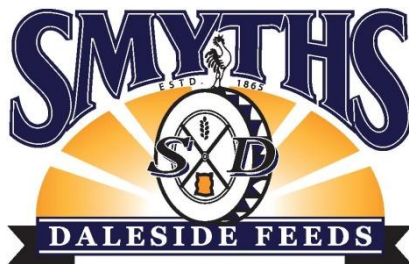


30/07/12 – Newsletter



The Little Farmer Calendar 2013 – Photographic Competition

Due to the huge success of our 2012 calendar, we have decided to run the competition again this year. Details on how to enter the competition can be found on our Facebook page or in the News section of our website <http://www.smythsfeeds.com/news-smyths-daleside>

Farm Management Notes July 2012 - By Jeremy Mc Gonigle

So far this summer the weather has been very difficult for grass and silage pastures.

On many farms silage had to be fed to dairy cows, this may lead to a shortage of forage this winter. Grass growth is still not up to expectations for the time of year. Now is a good time to estimate the quality and quantity of silage that is in the pit. Will you need a second cut or third cut?

.....PLAN.....

- Take as much surplus of grass as possible out over the next two months.
- In some areas silage may be in short supply so make sure you have enough forage for the coming winter as feed prices may be on the high side this year.

These are very important issues to address - now rather than later.

We often talk about feeding and managing the dairy cow, and on many farms visited over this last month I discovered one animal that was often forgotten about - the dairy heifer replacement.

- Our dairy heifers need to be gaining .8 kg per head /day of daily live weight gain to reach their target for bulling at 14-16 months of age.
- In poor weather or if grass is scarce, the growing heifer replacements need to be supplemented with a heifer replacement diet - feeding from 1.5-3kgs per head/day.
- This feeding level would depend on quality of grass, heifer weight, and age.
- Worm/fluke on a regular basis when in doubt, consult your veterinary surgeon.

Smyths Daleside Summer Dairy Diets are carefully formulated to suit this volatile summer weather. High in quality energy, protein & fibre they also contain a special Summer Mineral to counteract summer grass deficiencies and help to get your cow back in calf.

If grass is short supply introduce silage at the rate of 15kgs per/ head /day and take the hunger out of cows, this will help to build good grass cover. If possible try not to use the winter feed, you will have to replace it at a later stage.

GOOD MANAGEMENT PRACTICES – KEEPING LAMENESS AT A MINIMUM

It is important to be vigilant in terms of management practices – the following information on foot baths is designed as an aid to improving management practices on the farm, thereby helping to keep the incidence of lameness at minimal levels.

- Locate the foot bath in an area regularly travelled by cattle – the exit from the milking parlour works well.
- Foot baths should be 2.5-3m long and approximately 1m wide, with a depth of 15cm.
- Locate foot baths on a level surface.
- If practical, locate a foot bath containing water (pre-bath) preceding the treatment foot bath – this will help clean cows feet prior to entering the bath.
- Foot bath solutions should be 10-15cm deep to ensure adequate coverage of the foot area.
- Mats or straw in the bottom of the foot bath can help extend their life, especially if the feet are clean upon entering the footbath.
- Change footbath solutions after 150-200 cows have passed through. This can vary depending on cow cleanliness, use of pre-bath, type & concentration of medication used and weather conditions.
- Thoroughly drain foot bath and rinse with water before mixing a new batch of solution.
- Alternate times for replenishing foot bath with fresh solution – this lets each group of cows to have access to fresh solution.
- Cows should enter a clean dry area after passing through the foot bath. Foot baths are more effective for treating diseases of the inter-digital skin – such as inter-digital dermatitis and foot rot.
- It is recommended that foot baths are used at least 3-4 days per week.

The foot bath regime depends on the herd levels of lameness and the nature of foot problems. General recommendations cannot be made for every herd.

Manure deactivates the chemicals used in footbaths, therefore they must be managed properly to achieve maximum effectiveness. A poorly managed foot bath can actually spread infectious foot diseases.

Jeremy Mc Gonigle