

Straw options fact sheet

If you are short of silage, this fact sheet is for you

Among the many options for replacing silage, feeding straw is probably the most widespread. This fact sheet aims to help you get the most successful results for your farm by explaining straws limitations and showing you a number of ways to overcome them. Despite being relatively unpalatable, indigestible and low in protein, straw is an excellent base for ruminant diets where silage is unavailable. It is an excellent source of long fibre and there are a number of ways of improving both animal intakes and their utilisation of straw, and making it into an effective substitute for silage.

However, the transition from a silage-based diet to a straw-based diet must be controlled, by steadily introducing more straw into the diet and less silage over a period of 1-2 weeks to give the rumen sufficient time to adjust.

The feeding quality of straw can be improved by either treating it chemically, feeding other suitable feeds along with it or a combination of both. For many farmers, the chemical option is unsuitable because:

- It requires somewhere to store a large quantity of treated material that is protected from damp and vermin
- Processing equipment must be hired or bought
- The treatment chemicals themselves are costly
- The chemicals are hazardous, particularly caustic soda
- Extra manpower is required to make the treatment

In choosing suitable feeds to use with straw as a silage replacer, you are looking for ones which promote vigorous rumen fermentation. As a result, this maximises the rate of microbial growth in the rumen and makes full use of the digestible fraction of straw itself.

This requires two crucial components in the supplementary feeds – a good supply of fermentable energy (FME) together with a



compatible supply of effective rumen degradable protein (ERDP). However, the transition from a silage-based diet to a straw-based diet must be controlled, by steadily introducing more straw into the diet and less silage over a period of 1-2 weeks will give the rumen sufficient time to adjust.

With this in mind there are a number of molasses-based liquid feeds which are purpose made. Being very high in sugars and probably the single most palatable feed stuff for ruminants, molasses makes an ideal base for a feed to use with straw. Additionally, new liquid feed technology has been developed by E D & F Man Liquid Products to incorporate protein sources into molasses in a way which makes them behave ideally in the rumen from a nutritional point of view.

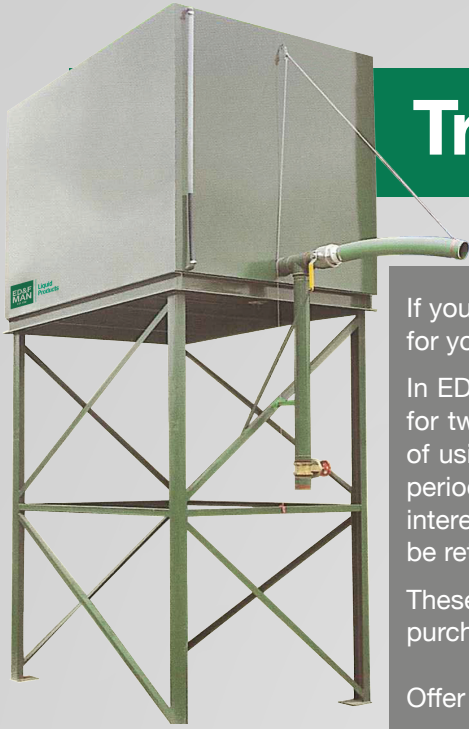
This patented Regulated Release process, as used in Regumix, Regumaize and Regupro feeds, releases nitrogen at a steady rate that is compatible with the rumen bacterial activity.

Coupled with their high sugar content, these feeds offer an ideal combination with straw to replace silage for animals on a medium to high output system. For lower levels of performance, a straight molasses blend may be sufficient.

When implementing a straw-based diet, it is also imperative to provide all animals good access to a plentiful supply of clean water. Also, straw is very deficient in minerals therefore additional mineral supplementation could be necessary.

	Barley Straw	Grass Silage	Regumix	PotBlack	Regupro50
Dry Matter (%)	86	25	67	60	60
ME (Mj/kg DM)	7	10	13.1	12.4	12.6
Protein (%DM)	5	12	27	24	50
Sugars (%DM)	1.5	2	50	40	43
To replace 10kg grass silage					
Grass silage		10			
Straw			2.1	2.1	2.4
Regumix			1		
Potblack				1.1	
Regupro50					0.8
Dry Matter fed		2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Protein as fed g		300	270	248	343
Mj as fed		25	21.4	21	20.5
Sugars as fed g		50	360	290	240

For further information about replacing silage with other feeds, you are very welcome to call our freephone number 0800 389 8450.



Trial a storage tank - for free!

If you are thinking of using molasses for the first time, and you want to see if it works for you and your stock, then ED&F Man offer a tank trial scheme.

In ED&F Man's tank trial scheme, a fully-equipped storage tank is delivered on-farm for two months, you only pay for the product. During this time the beneficial effects of using ED&F Man's molasses products can be assessed. After the two month trial period, you can purchase the tank outright, or spread the payment using ED&F Man's interest free finance scheme. In the unlikely event of seeing no benefits, the tank can be returned at no cost, except that of the product purchased.

These high level tanks are convenient to use, and allow more cost-effective bulk purchases to be made.

Offer may be withdrawn at any time and is subject to terms and conditions.

Fresh-Guard

Worried about your TMR Heating?

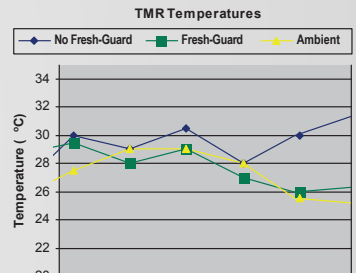
It is vital to produce a high quality well balanced ration, but this can quickly be undermined if the ration starts to ferment and heat. The quality can then quickly deteriorate.

Feed spoilage in the trough has been identified as a significant cost to farmers.

A cow eating 1 kg less dry matter due to aerobic spoilage could be producing around 2.3 litres less milk. What makes it worse is that it is the high value nutrients that spoil most quickly. The

Fresh-Guard option can be included in any of ED&F Man's bulk molasses products.

Effective in preventing TMR spoilage at feed out, **Fresh-Guard** is a cost effective option available to farmers looking to prevent heating/spoilage at a cost of less than 3p per cow per day.



Fresh-Guard can be added to any ED&F Man liquid product



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