

ADVERTISING FEATURE

HARPERS FEEDS

Keeping it simple: Molasses blends for cost-effective diets this winter

THIS year's first cut grass silages have higher NDF and lignin contents making the forage more difficult to digest.

At the same time, they are lower in the rapidly fermentable carbohydrates needed to feed the fibre digesting bacteria.

"Diets will need more fermentable metabolisable energy in supplements," Danielle Goatley from ED&F Man explains.

"In addition, we are seeing low Rumen Fermentable Proteins which means nitrogen efficiency and protein sources will be important.

"Against this background and with cereal prices high, 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 ED&F Man show the benefits of feeding molasses.

In the trial, mid-lactation cows were fed on diets where up to 40% of the



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rape and soya was replaced with Regumaize 44, a 44% protein, 55% sugar, high protein molasses blend, but leaving the total dry matter fed the same.

The change in the diet maintained milk yields and butterfat levels with milk protein being increased, from 3.62% to 3.71% due to the extra

"We would never advocate a total switch from conventional protein to a high protein molasses blend as this would compromise the total protein balance in the diet, but 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.

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.

In the autumn of 2020, working with Richard Waters, Ruminant Feed Specialist and Development Manager from Harpers Feeds, 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 and 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," comments Dave.

"This is something which is very much needed on our Saputo contract and with feed prices 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 enabling them to reduce this 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.

Dave's system can be easily replicated anywhere but he adds the greatest success comes from "filling them up and lying them down."