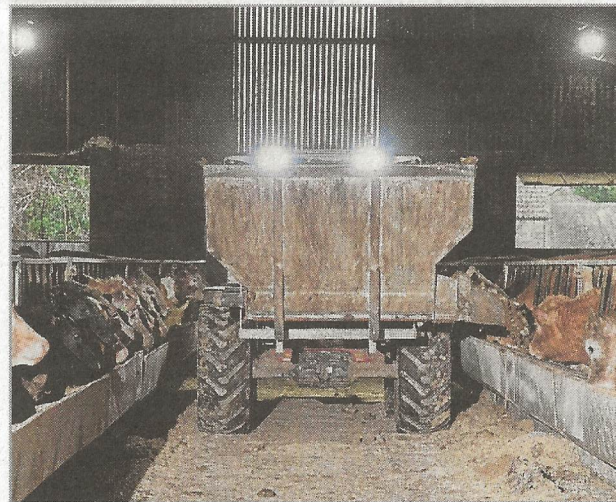


markets. About 75% of these area grow fodder beet so



Robbos fodder beet is proving easy to feed at Herdmanston and the cattle have an appetite for it

crop in November – which Anderson admits was later than planned due to the wet weather conditions. “But, it yielded well, and it’s certainly taken pressure off the silage and barley. Cattle have grown well and they’re killing out better.”

However, he wants to improve the chopping equipment – last winter he used a Ritchie Root bucket feeder which was not ideal.

“I’ve still a bit to learn with growing and feeding fodder beet but it’s just what

tolerant.

Longstanding variety Robbos maintains high yield scores and the advantage of only 60% of the root on the ground giving it an advantage for lifting and for grazing livestock in situ.

Fosyma combines high dry matter yield with a clean red skinned root and a relatively high proportion (35%) sitting out of the ground. This makes it suitable for grazing in situ as well as for lifting and it carries less risk of soil

new varieties that are now available,” said John Spence, Limagrain forage crop product manager.

“But the results also show the consistency of dry matter and fresh yields each year of fodder beet, particularly varieties such as Robbos, despite varying weather conditions.

“Regardless of wet or drought conditions in the growing season – and we’ve had both in the past few years – the crop still yields high dry matters and energy

can make sure they get the best yields and feed value for their livestock,” he concluded.

■ Limagrain UK publishes its annual trial data, available to all growers to enable them to make informed decisions. There are no recommended lists for fodder beet. Limagrain UK’s latest fodder beet trial results are available from its website [lgseeds.co.uk/crops/grass-and-forage/fodder-beet/](http://lgseeds.co.uk/crops/grass-and-forage/fodder-beet/)

## How to ‘eke’ out silage supplies

THE wet weather will delay turnout out across the country and silage stocks will start to run low, so incorporating a proportion of straw and molasses in the diet will be an effective way to eke out silage stocks.

“While grass covers are increasing, ground conditions mean cows on many farms will be unable to graze effectively, putting pressure on silage stocks as the prospects for turnout are not encouraging,” said Georgina Chapman from molasses blends specialist ED&F Man.

“There are ways to extend silage stocks until cows can go out, with one cost-effective option being to

consider feeding straw and a molasses blend. This can either be used to replace a proportion of grass silage in the milking diet, or to replace silage totally in heifer and growing cattle diets.”

Trials at the South West Dairy Development Centre, in conjunction with Kingshay, showed it is possible to successfully replace 2.5kg silage dry matter in dairy diets (around 7-10kg freshweight) with 2.2kgFW of straw and 1kg of a molasses blend.

Assuming cows had been fed 12.5kgDM of silage, moving to 10kgDM of silage and the straw, a molasses blend alternative means

every four days on the new diet would save enough silage to allow an extra day of winter housing from current silage stocks.

“The molasses blend plays a crucial role in maintaining good rumen function as well as containing highly rumen fermentable sugars, increasing microbial protein production and stimulating rumen microbes to improve fibre digestion,” she added.

“The blend used in the trial also contained regulated release protein, which releases nitrogen at a steady rate to optimise rumen microbial activity. Coupled with a high sugar content, they promote rumen fermentation and

activity and can utilise straw effectively. When implementing a straw-based diet, it is important to provide access to a plentiful supply of clean water.

“The transition from a silage-based diet to a straw-based must be controlled, by introducing more straw into the diet and reducing silage over a few days to give the rumen microbes time to adjust to the new forage.

“Finally, straw is deficient in minerals so additional mineral supplementation could be necessary.

“Incorporating straw and molasses into dairy diets will help minimise the consequences of any delay to turnout,” she concluded.

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