

# Focused on Farming



## Future proof your calves

DR RUTH LAWSON

Farmers should think of calves as baby dairy cows so that they consider them as productive from the start of their lives rather than something they are waiting to milk years down the line. Optimal calf growth rate can help to unlock genetic potential for later life, enabling higher milk yields in two years' time.

Calves reared on a high plane of nutrition will have fast efficient growth, less scour, higher resistance to disease challenge and optimal rumen development. When these calves eventually enter the herd not only will they produce more milk, but they will also be more durable. In fact, pre-weaning growth sets lifetime performance with effects on yield continuing through to the second and third lactations.

Roger Hildreth farms at Curlew Fields Farm, York and advocates this strategy for dairy heifers. Roger says "Future proofing your calves begins with good colostrum supply". His calves are fed their own mother's milk, never pooled colostrum. Roger says "If there's a problem with the calf's mother we have some in the freezer but this has already been tested with the colostrometer". His calves are fed 4 litres of colostrum in the first 24 hours and spend 4 days on their own mother's colostrum / milk. Then calves go onto best quality skim based calf milk replacer, with straw and pellets available. At first they start on one litre twice a day. At a week old they will be on 2.5 litres twice a day, building up to 4 litres at 3 weeks, equating to 800g of calf milk replacer. Roger is making use of a high growth rate at a time in the animal's life when it is most efficient.

Growth is visible, nearly double when compared with 4 litres per day at 125g/l.

Calves will also suffer less scour as well as fewer respiratory treatments. It's also far easier to get heifers served at 13 months to calve down at 2 years.

With high quality skim-based calf milk replacer during the first 5 to 6 weeks of life gains of 800 to 1000 g can be achieved.

Calves at Roger's farm are weaned at 9 or 10 weeks with weaning taking place over the course of a week to 10 days. After weaning heifers are fed a blend containing wheat, soyabean meal, rapeseed meal and youngstock minerals & vitamins. Roger's ideas are based on a trip he took to the USA, where experts said calves need to double their birth weight at 7 weeks and anything lost can't be got back later in life. They also said heifers on cow's milk don't show improvements in heifer yield.

Roger advises never doing anything with the calves in cold weather, this includes disbudding and moving. Roger's calf housing is positioned so they get the west wind and therefore the first air. He doesn't vaccinate for pneumonia, but advocates plenty of space and big open sheds. Doors on the pens have rubber strips to stop draughts.

For Roger the benefits are clear. Apart from healthy calves, the estimates are 1000 litres extra milk in the heifer lactation. Although he is already achieving calving at 2 years, (which means serving them at 380 kg), Roger thinks this can be reduced further. Roger weighs animals every month and says he serves on weight, not age.

One possible explanation for this phenomenon could be the influence of early feeding levels on the development of the mammary gland. It may be that some metabolic pathways are "switched on" by nutrients in early life. This will also have implications for farmers selling dairy heifers. Heifers that are reared to optimize genetic potential in early life will perform better when sold as newly-calven.

**For more information please visit**  
[www.wejameson.co.uk](http://www.wejameson.co.uk)



MARCH 2013 ISSUE

## Monthly Offers

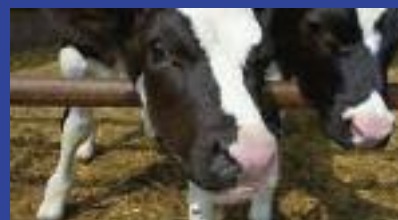
Excellent Quality 6 Rail Wooden Hurdles  
**4' £6.70    5' £7.40    6' £7.70**  
Collected from Masham during March

Shires & Weatherbeta horse rugs **10% off**

Full range of gardening products, e.g. compost, seeds, tools and much more.

Also, buy two Westland straights for only **£10**, choose from: -

- Growmore
- Bone meal
- Fish, blood & bone



**£1 a bag off Jamesons calf milk powders. Try the best calf milk replacer on the market now for even less.**

Choose from either whey or skim based powder, with: -

- IMMU gain immunoglobulins for rotavirus, coronavirus, E.coli, salmonella, cryptosporidia.
- Health pack – every supplement we can find that has proven benefits to help calves thrive
- Ingredients used that calves can digest well and that don't irritate the calf's gut.



**McIntyre Meats are offering 'Jameson customers' a special deal.** During March or April customers will qualify for a special price of £18/lamb for slaughtering, butchering and packaging ready for the freezer. To take advantage of this offer customers must contact McIntyre Meats on 01969 650999 and state their Jameson account number, book the lambs in, and present a March or April newsletter when delivering the lambs. One newsletter represents one booking. Maximum of two bookings per customer. Offer ends 30th April.

# New life

KATHRYN LAWSON

A newborn lamb requires 180 – 290 ml of colostrum per kg of body weight, which for maximum efficacy must be consumed in the first 18 hours of life. This colostrum will provide the lamb with a rich source of energy to help it to survive. It will also provide antibodies to help fight infection while the lamb develops its own stable immune system. Immune systems of lambs can take some time to develop therefore the importance of the antibodies received via the colostrum is paramount. This highlights the need for the newborn lamb to receive the required amount of colostrum which can give the lamb the protection it requires for a number of weeks.

It is imperative that the newborn lamb receives colostrum as soon as possible after birth as the intestines are permeable and able to absorb immunoglobulins. After the first 24 hours, digestive enzymes in the stomach will destroy any ingested colostrum. Lack of colostrum from the mother can be overcome by either giving colostrum from another ewe or from a high quality lamb colostrum supplement such as "First Life".

**Buy 2.5 kg of First Life artificial colostrum and get 500 castration rings free or buy 1 kg and get 100 free.**

## Borderway UK Dairy Expo 2013

The second dairy expo will take place on Saturday 9th March 2013, held at Borderway Mart, Carlisle. The expo showcases the very best in pedigree dairy cattle and over 300 entries are expected. There will be over 150 trade stands attending. Jamesons have a stand and hope that any customers attending the show will come to see us.

We will be launching our 2013 Grass Seed Mixture range, so you can ask for a new catalogue and take advantage of our special show offer on grass seeds.

For more information see <http://harrisonandhetherington.co.uk/dairy-expo/dairy-expo-2013/>

## Ammonium Chloride for ruminants

GRAHAM JAMESON

At Jamesons, we have been including ammonium chloride in some of our feeds to help prevent urinary calculi (stones) in finishing lambs. A reduction in pH of urine has been shown to greatly reduce the prevalence of urinary calculi (stones) in lambs. New regulations on the use of ammonium chloride for ruminant feed have now come into force. Ammonium chloride has been authorized as a feed additive for lambs for fattening only. However, the industry is having difficulty in sourcing the new approved version. We have examined our products and done all we can to formulate them to prevent stones in intensively finished lambs.

# Yorkshire Grassland Society

DAVID LEWIS

The central Yorkshire Grassland Society is a thriving group of farmers and advisors who meet monthly over winter for discussions, and to listen to speakers on a wide range of subjects relating to grassland and production from grass. A farm walk is organised during the summer.

We meet on the first Wednesday evening of the month at The Crown Hotel in Boroughbridge for a very enjoyable and sociable meal, followed by a speaker. We always have a good discussion at the end of the talk.

**New members are very welcome; please contact David Lewis on 07710 600848 for further details.**

## Sowing the seeds

GRAHAM JAMESON

Last summer wasn't very kind in many ways, but damage to grassland is particularly noticeable. For a permanent solution to poached up grassland you could look at astroturf or put cows on wheels and move around the farm on tracks. Alternatively, you could reseed and have your investment repaid many times over. 2013 grass seed prices are slightly lower than last year so it is an attractive return on investment.

You're welcome to ask your rep for a copy of our new grass seed catalogue. You can also download it from our website. The Jamesons website is packed with a massive amount of information about farming, our farming issues section addresses common problems on the farm and offers product solutions. The newsletter can be downloaded, product specification sheets printed off and the grass seed catalogue can be browsed. Our blog keeps you up to date with special offers and what's going on in farming.

**For more information please visit [www.wejameson.co.uk](http://www.wejameson.co.uk)**



Blooming horses, coming over here, stealing our jobs...



## Recovering from 2012

PETER HARLAND

The most widespread crop in the UK is grass, but how much of it is productive? Sward damage may have occurred following overstocking, flooding, winter kill or where weeds have got a foothold. 2013 grass seed prices are slightly lower than 2012 so reseeding is an attractive return on investment.

Overseeding / slot seeding is a low cost method of introducing new grass and clover seed into an existing sward, without the need to prepare a traditional seedbed. After sowing, grazing is preferred to cutting as bulking for silage will crowd out new growth. Grazing will reduce the competition from the grass, but care must be taken not to overgraze. Jamesons Ley Mixture can be used to reseed damaged or old grass leys.

For short term overseeding options try Jameson's No. 2 silage mixture and for longer term overseeding use No.12. Jameson's No. 12 Overseeding mix repairs thin and damaged leys, and contains tetraploid ryegrasses which exhibit vigorous growth. It is a flexible mixture for cutting or grazing consisting of tetraploid varieties which compete more favourably with the existing sward. These overseeding grasses will boost productivity and prolong the life of the sward to provide good quality forage for a number of years.

**For more information please visit [www.wejameson.co.uk](http://www.wejameson.co.uk)**

## PENTO-GUARD

DAVID LEWIS

Late last summer we launched our new silage additive (PENTO-GUARD), with a number of customers using it on second-cut grass, maize and whole crop silages. In an extremely difficult year, some analyses were very good and some salvaged reasonable crops in appalling conditions.

So what are the benefits of using our silage additive? Silages are sweeter and more palatable resulting in higher dry matter intakes and improved milk yield. Yeast and mould growth is reduced, with reduced spoilage and heating at feeding out. Aerobic stability is improved and protein retention increased. Also, PENTO-GUARD quickly creates an anaerobic state thereby improving DM recovery. **Ask your rep for more information or have a look at our website [www.wejameson.co.uk](http://www.wejameson.co.uk)**

# NOT STAGGERINGLY OBVIOUS! PETER HARLAND

We've had plenty to be gloomy about lately so let's do our best not to get caught out this year with grass staggers (hypomagnesaemia tetany). Magnesium is required to regulate the nervous system, and a deficiency can be noted early, excitable stock, exaggerated gaits, bellowing and wild eyes (difficult indeed for the limy man to spot! Or perhaps even the Galloway farmer!) The sign we all recognise is a dead animal with muddy ground around her, indicating her last struggles. Causes can be complex; many farmers tell me they have a high mag index in their soils, and with the next breath, how terribly stock suffer from grass staggers on their farm.

A point to bear in mind is that Magnesium, Potash and Calcium are absorbed by grass passively, in the same proportions that they are found in the soil. Soil index of 3 for potash is not the same as a soil index of 3 for magnesium. What this means in the field, is you can have nearly four times more potash in your soil than magnesium at index 3. When you take into account the soil calcium levels, and grass DM the amount of magnesium in the grass can be a lot less than what might first appear.

We all know lush grass can have a part to play as this affects grass throughput, and can limit nutrient absorption. Potash and nitrogen can also reduce mag absorption in the rumen due to complex ionic interactions, so grazing manured fields, or fertilized fields will increase the risk. Old girls and fat girls are also more at risk, as are

certain breeds and cow families. Stress, be it bad weather, being chased, or fighting, is going to reduce feed intake; this will reduce mag consumption, so also increase risk. Stress also places an increased demand on magnesium as it is required in larger quantities to regulate the nervous system, so a twofold effect can be felt. Livestock "living off their backs" are therefore also at higher risk. It's also important to remember that cattle cannot store magnesium in their bodies so a regular supply is needed. Cattle can only absorb magnesium with a 17% efficiency so when we calculate requirements this must be accounted for. Salt licks can help increase magnesium absorption.

Offering fibre such as hay while grazing at the shoulders of the year can also reduce risk by slowing the rate of grass passage through the cow and so giving her longer to absorb nutrients. Magnesium boluses are a good way to ensure adequate supply, and in combination with molasses mag licks will supply extra energy to livestock potentially helping them to hold in calf, maintain body weight and come bulling. Tri-mag found in our supplements will provide three sources of magnesium, coupled with other vitamins and minerals, to help ensure more efficient absorption. Dead stock are not worth anything if they're dead in the field, so a little proactive action will be well worth it.

For more information please visit [www.wejameson.co.uk](http://www.wejameson.co.uk)

## Hilda Halfbreds rants about sheep cake

Dr Ruth: So Hilda, His Lordship didn't feed you Jamesons' Ewedale sheep cake this year, how did you get on?

Hilda Halfbred: Sunflowers, although useful for covering modesty as strategically placed items for Rhylstone WI, they are not good to eat. If I wanted that amount of calcium, I'd eat rocks. Do I look like Victoria Beckham? No. So why you feeding me "All Bran"? I'm fighting off Schmallenberg, Toxo, Black bag to name but a few, so yes, I do need 150 vitamin E. Thank you. And finally, if I liked walking round in circles I'd get on the magic roundabout and solve all my problems. So enough with the mouldy silage.



### Contractors / Services

Agricultural Electrician, J R Graham. Fault finding and repairs, breakdowns, new installations, lighting, security, 3-phase. Tel John on 07595 620935 or 01423 323436.

Fencing Contractors, A and S Corner, Easingwold. Call Andrew for a competitive quote: 01347 823645.

Cattle freeze-branding, North Yorkshire. Tel Steve Johnson 07940 064991 or 01347 810980.

Fencing Contractors David Robinson Leyburn 07762 317201

Agri Pest management. Agricultural pest control - rats, mice, moles, rabbits & insects. Tel. Nick 07716 467460 or 01765 640 867

Slitting and over-seeding in one pass. Sward lifting, slurry tanking, ploughing, man & tractor and concrete grooving. Tel. Mike 01765 689 039

Rhodes Feed Services for on-farm rolling, grinding, mill & mix services. All areas covered. 01759 318230 or 07811 432127

All types of fencing work. 3 tonne Digger hire. Ditching, lane repairs etc. Simon Poulter 07751 553504

### For Sale & Wanted

Last Season well got Clamp Silage. Contact Wm Iveson 01969 622116

Good round bale haylage. Richmond area 01748 811576

Round bale silage/haylage, good quality. Also, available round bale hay. Tel. Steven 07751 192153 or 01765 635217

200 round bales of well-made silage £20 per bale. Killinghall area 07764 947436

Barney's farmhouse foods. Homemade jams, chutneys, marmalades, sauces & cakes for sale. Tel. 01423 780207 or email [anneoxenfarm@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:anneoxenfarm@yahoo.co.uk)

Limousin Bulls. Tel John Swales 07713 322245 or 01845 597339

Well-made silage in Heston bales. Tel. 01423 340389 or 07801 143304

Bainbridge Feedall vertical mixer/chopper. 10 cubic capacity. As new. Easingwold area. Tel. David 07773 606682

P2 Haybob Lely elevator perryloader and 250cc trike. Barn stored and in good condition. Tel. 07895 488002

Small bales of seed hay from a family farm. Ripon area. Tel. 01765 602818

First cut clamp silage. PTO shaft (haybob type) Tel. 077364 27028

Angus bulls for sale or hire. Peter Turnbull 01347 868236 or 07836 370253

