Urea - a cost effective alternative to ammonium nitrate? Neil Edinson

With current ammonium nitrate prices continuing to be high, this may be a time to consider urea as an alternative. With urea at 46% like for like unit value, in the current market ammonium nitrate would need to be under £200/t. History will recount however, initial concerns with regards to leaching or gassing off (volatilization) when urea was applied; however, these concerns were never proven. There may be some losses in high temperature, high moisture situations, but similarly the same may apply to ammonium nitrate.

Because urea has a slower release action it should be applied 10-12 days prior to your normal first application when the temperature should not have a significant effect on any, perceived losses. Granular or Pneumatic Urea is available, so check your fertiliser supplier’s settings to establish which would be the best form of urea for your application.

A farm unit that uses say 50t of ammonium nitrate could try a load of urea as a first early application. It will also give you feedback about your slage making, highlighting areas where you can improve the process.

It is sensible to offer the suckler calves creep feed well before you plan to wean them. Creep feeding helps reduce the stress of changing diets for calves in winter, as ruminers need several weeks to get used to different rations so that micro-organisms inside them can adapt. Managing stress on the calves helps protect them against diseases such as scours and pneumonia, when they are housed. Creep feed should be designed to aid rumen development. They should be palatable and need to be offered fresh. Blends are particularly good for this job as the physical nature encourages intake. A mineralized concentrate will make up for any deficiencies and promote effective functioning of the immune system. A couple of weeks before weaning, move calves on to a creep with forage offered ad lib. This is a further attempt to reduce stress after weaning, minimizing the number of changes the calves have to endure.

If the plan is to sell calves after weaning at least they will know how to eat when they are housed and mixed with other cattle after undergoing the stress of the auction and transportation as well as being separated from their mothers. It’s a good idea to administer any wormers or vaccinations prior to weaning. This will reduce the stress levels at the time of weaning resulting in fewer cases of pneumonia and scour.

It also makes sense to weigh the calves regularly so that you can monitor performance. Replacement heifers can be weighed regularly so that they are big enough to bull and then calf at 2 years old. Heifers will need to grow at 0.8 kg/day from birth to bailing at 15 months.

Biolime H90

Biolime H90 is our new cow-friendly hydrated lime. It is a hydrated lime product which can adapt. Managing stress on the calves helps protect them against diseases such as scours and pneumonia, when they are housed. Creep feed should be designed to aid rumen development. They should be palatable and need to be offered fresh. Blends are particularly good for this job as the physical nature encourages intake. A mineralized concentrate will make up for any deficiencies and promote effective functioning of the immune system. A couple of weeks before weaning, move calves on to a creep with forage offered ad lib. This is a further attempt to reduce stress after weaning, minimizing the number of changes the calves have to endure.

Summary
- Don’t do all the jobs at the same time as weaning, it’s too stressful.
- Have your slage analysed so you can tailor the fed in feeds to the toffe.
- Weigh calves regularly to monitor performance and get them used to being handled.

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Peter Harland

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Finishing hill lambs

Dr Ruth Lawson

Having a firm grip on costs of production is vital when finishing store lambs this season. Store lambs should still make money this year; provided finishers are mindful of the initial bought-in store lambs this season. Store lambs should still make money this season.

When lambs are brought on to the farm they will need to be isolated from other sheep for at least 3 weeks. Lambs will first need to be wormed and flu ked, but watch out for withdrawal times and don’t get caught out. Often they will also benefit from a dose of vitamins and minerals. Also, it’s wise to vaccinate for clostridial disease and don’t assume the vendor has done it.

Long keep lambs can run on until the new year offered as when raced mae is fed. Supplying glucogenic (starchy) ingredients will help fertility; getting cows back in calf quickly at the same time as maintaining milk yield.

The process involves the use of a processing aid that works within the feed to bind starch molecules to form pH sensitive complexes for starch. This starch complex is stable at rumen pH, however they are broken down in the more acidic conditions which exist in the abomasum and lower intestine, thereby releasing the protected starch to the animal. Pro-wheat and Pro-barley also slows starch fermentation in the rumen thereby reducing the risk of acidosis.

Reports from a large scale beef finisher using Pro-barley show an increase in live weight gain of 0.2 kg per head per day. This is with no extra feed eaten, on a farm where live weight gain was already very high.

For dairy cows, Pro-wheat and Pro-barley allow high starch inclusion without upsetting the rumen. Similar results are obtained as when raced mae is fed. Supplying glucogenic (starchy)

Pro-wheat & Pro-barley

Dr Ruth Lawson

Cereals are needed in rations for dairy cows to promote milk protein and fertility in early lactation. In beef cattle, stallie cans produce good levels of fast finish. However, acidosis can be an issue in diets for both. We now supply protected starch feeds – Pro-wheat and Pro-barley. Part of the starch is protected in the rumen and the portion that is broken down in the rumen breaks down more slowly. This makes these products more rumen-friendly, resulting in fewer incidences of acidosis.

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Jamesons customers top all sections at Otley market

At one of the October sales, Jamesons customers topped all sections at Otley market. The top price lambs at £111 per head were presented by M&K Farrar, Wighill Farm partnership. Top pence per kilo new season lambs at 247p/kg were from D&C Mitchell, Wildden. Top price ewes and rams at 960p per head came from LW & EJ Coverdale, Beckwithshaw.

Thank you!

Graham Jameson

A huge thank you to our customers for donations in our collection boxes at the summer shows. £514 was raised for Yorkshire Cancer Research.

Feed focus: Hogg blend

Graham Jameson

Hogg blend ensures fast weight gains, finishing lambs in lightning quick time. For rapid weight gains, finishing diets must be palatable, high in energy and must contain adequate protein, minerals (especially calcium, since grains are low in calcium), and vitamins. To achieve high performance and encourage a healthy gut, lambs should receive a diet that combines high starch sources for rapid gain with high energy fibrous ingredients helping to keep the rumen balanced; this can be achieved by feeding hogg blend.

Energy levels are high in Hogg blend at 13.2 MJ/kg and protein levels are 17%. Minerals are balanced to help prevent urinary calculi (stones) in intensively fed lambs. Ammonium chloride is also added for this purpose. High quality ingredients are included and a high level of cereals ensures fast growth rates and maximum feed conversion efficiency. Hogg blend can be fed ad lib or restricted depending on the speed of finish required. Ingredients have been selected that are rumen friendly and so lambs can go on to hogg blend ad lib from the start.

Check out our website www.wejameson.co.uk for specifications for our hogg blend and speak to your rep or ring the office for a quote.