

Autumn 2020  
**NEWSLETTER**



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WOW! What a summer we have had in Gippsland! Ongoing rain, warm weather and plenty of silage made is setting us up for a great 2020 Autumn / Winter. With the good milk prices it's shaping up to be a fine season too. It has been a trying time with COVID-19 virus about so we hope you are all safe and well.

It's time to be thinking about calf rearing again... yep I know it's been "done to death" but there are some reminders in the article below to help your calves get off to a flying start.

All the Browns Tech staff have a Brix meter in the car to test colostrum on farm to assist you to use your best colostrum for the babies. Brix meters can also be purchased cheaply through our store and are a valuable addition to your tool box.



## Calf sheds & feeders



Now is the time to cast a critical eye over your calf sheds. Ask yourself these things:

- Are they clean? If not then clean out and disinfect with Virkon S as it is the best and safest disinfectant available. Can be used safely in a disease outbreak while calves are in the sheds over the top of bedding.
- Are they dry? No leaks in the roof, no leaking guttering or water drinkers?
- Do they face the right way for winter sun? (North in most areas of Gippsland) If not consider using a different shed as sunlight assists with disease control
- Is there good ventilation - but NO drafts? If you can sit on the floor in the shed and have no cold wind blowing over you then the shed is suitable.
- Now is also the time to review last year's bedding- what was good about it and what needs improving?
- Check feeders are clean and replace teats as required.
- Don't wait until the first calves are on the ground- be proactive and ready to go.

## Crops, pastures and the dreaded endophytes etc



A lot of farms are still feeding off millet, pasja and rape crops and mixes of all of these. There has also been a lot of rust on older pastures which is a problem too. The rain and humid weather is causing health issues in herds from nery behaviour to photo symptoms and Zearalone on the pasture is causing some prolapse and abortions along with heat stress symptoms. Whether a Zinc oxide pellet needs to be added to your ration or a binder will suffice is a decision to be made on individual farms in conjunction with your Browns Tech rep.

Please note that many farms have also used Perennial Vic rye grass as it is cheaper and persists longer but this variety causes very bad endophyte issues on farm and may not be cheap in the long term! PS baling rusty pasture to feed later is also a bad idea as endophytes will be present in any silage or hay meaning that the cattle will get another dose later in the season.

## Corn – super food for lead feed and early lactation herds

For many years now Browns have been using a percentage of corn in our lead feeds and for early lactation rations. This is because corn greatly helps glucose uptake and assists the liver so that fresh cows do not lose weight when milk production outstrips intake in fresh cows. This in turn assists early cycling, and healthy livers that are able to process quality feed means less early lactation issues like ketosis. Talk to your Browns tech rep about your herds requirements before calving as a good start means a good season.



## Comparing feeds



Recently we have sent a number of feeds tests away to Bendigo for testing as there have been a few clients offered a "cheaper" mix that is supposed to be the same as their current one. The Browns mixes we tested came in over our formulator specifications for starch and ME ,and protein was very close (within 1% of our formulator), but many of the feeds we tested that farmers have been offered have fallen far short of the figures quoted to them by the company reps.

PLEASE be aware that Browns do NOT cut their feeds with mill run, almond meal, PKE, Urea or DDG as we do NOT stock these products and cannot do this even if you want us to! Some feeds that were quoted at certain energy / protein level didn't meet those specifications when we sent them away for testing. Feeds high in Millrun or PKE will have higher NDF (fibre) figures and lower starch levels which may look like good value but are really not as cows then cannot eat enough quality pasture as they are full of low value filler. This will be very obvious on feed test.

If you are short of grass... well then that is a different story, but you would still be better off to use quality protein hay and your own silage than waste money on poor quality feed. No one should be short of pasture or quality silage this season and low starch high fibre feeds will not peak cows high enough or help them persist until dry off.

## Watch Urea rates on old pastures

We have noticed that older rye grass species are responding poorly to standard 90 kg/Ha Urea applications that are now used for newer species.

In the current sudden dry conditions, the pasture appears to react as if this N rate is toxic and is producing large endophyte loads and rust, causing bad health issues in herds.

Consider reducing Urea applications on these older species to 30-50 kg/Ha as the growth response will be better and save you money, as older species like Vic Rye were developed before the current recommended rates of Urea and often perform better using Pasture Booster or DAP with less impact on herd health.

## Hay Report

Demand for Victorian hay heading north to NSW and QLD has slowed considerably the past month. This means there is a reasonable quantity of cereal hay and vetch hay shedded and available for sale throughout Northern Victoria and the Wimmera.

If you require cereal hay going into the next few months we have wheat hay and oaten hay shedded available immediately. Also if you require vetch hay, we have a small amount of good quality hay tested and shedded for immediate delivery.

If you require any hay going forward please call for delivered prices.

Director, Cameron Brown



## Grain Report

Unfortunately the COVID-19 outbreak has caused panic in the globe's grain market with it pushing prices quite high over the past two weeks. With a fall in the Australian dollar and a rise in wheat futures, it has made Australian wheat very attractive for export.

Another factor influencing price's throughout the world is the stocking up of essential items such as pasta and bread, this creates demand for flour, and then flow on raw materials such as wheat.

On a positive note, this crop plantings season is just around the corner and with a reasonable amount of sub soil moisture, crops should get off to a great start for the 20/21 season.

Director, Chris Brown



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