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## Benefits of corn in lead feed & early lactation, please take note...

Research has proven that the addition of corn into lead feed rations and the early lactation diet is beneficial. Corn is a bypass starch and helps to prime the liver to deliver Glucose precursors to the cows for energy to stop weight loss and put them into positive energy balance more quickly - leading to more milk/better protein test and earlier return to breed. The small extra cost is well worthwhile as part of a management plan.

Please be aware that adding a lot of canola meal without balancing this with corn will result in early lactation body condition loss and this will

result in lower numbers of cows cycling and reduced conception rates as until she is NOT still losing weight she will NOT cycle or hold to service. If you want better conception rates don't forget to add corn!



Fresh cows do better with corn in their diet



## Silo cleaning time!

Many silos have a build-up of pellets/dust/husks etc if using a grain mix and now while cows are going out may be a great time to empty and clean the silo for this season. Some moisture always seeps into silos through the "hat" on the top or through welds and can cause wet mouldy feed to stick to the sides of the silo. This can often mean the silo looks full but it's not! Moulds and mycotoxins breeding in the silo can have negative effects on intake/health and production so a yearly "spring" (autumn) clean is a good idea.

## Preparing Cows at dry off for stress free calving

No other area of herd management is as important as the preparation for dry off and the start of calving. Everything you do at this time will help or hinder you later in lactation. A few points to consider...

- Dry cows off in good condition. On a 1-5 scale they should be a 4 or slightly better. That way they can just be maintained during the dry period and it actually costs less money to do this as while still milking there is cash flow! It is easier to put weight on them while they are still milking rather than play catch up in the dry period as it doesn't happen.
- Cows do NOT have to lose one body condition score after calving! This does not need to happen if they are fed well prior to and after calving!
- The milker ration should have had high levels of Calcium through the year so that the cow can deposit enough on her bones to draw on at calving. A good rule of thumb is 1% of dry matter intake so if she is eating 20 kg she needs up to 200 grams of calcium.
- I know it sounds like a lot but she needs it to produce milk/deliver a healthy calf, support her immune system, draw on the stored calcium on her bones at point of calving and contract her uterus to calve and then expel the afterbirth.
- Then supply plenty of Calcium once calved to replace what has been depleted.
- Calcium is super important for conception and the immune system. If she doesn't get enough she is more prone to early lactation diseases like Milk fever, Retained afterbirth and even Ketosis as Calcium improves rumen starch digestion.
- Ensure adequate bypass protein is supplied (like canola meal) in the lead feed ration as the cow needs it for calf growth and for her own needs to prime up for good milk production. If she doesn't get it the calf will take it from the mothers own body tissues so you start "behind the 8 ball" even before she has calved.
- The cow's reserves of macros and micros have been depleted in the dry period so make sure Copper, Selenium, Vitamin E (all the anti oxidants) and all other essential minerals are included in a lead feed mix. We have also included organic zinc in our lead feed grain mix to harden feet before the wet weather arrives.
- Make sure you keep her gut full in the dry period so that her stomach doesn't shrink as the calf fills the space. The more you stretch the gut prior to calving, the more she will be able to fit in after calving and can then produce milk.
- Dry matter intake during the dry period and immediately after calving cannot be neglected as this will impact badly on cow health, reproduction, milk and ultimately \$ in your pocket. Do NOT skimp on feeding fresh cows well!
- Please be aware that if you use an anionic salt based lead feed and you haven't supplied sufficient calcium through the lactation then there are no reserves of calcium to draw on and if you use an anionic ration to acidify the blood and draw on stores that are not there- then milk fever will often be worse than doing nothing!
- It is also a good idea to drench for worms and administer a 7- in 1 booster at dry off time so the herd starts clean and protected for the next lactation. Consider E.coli/rotavirus vaccinations for the herd to protect newborn calves from scours but not to be administered at the same time as 7 in 1 top up.
- Browns tech staff can also check urine pH on your cows to ensure your lead feed ration is working
- These tips should help you enjoy a stress free calving... if there is such a thing!



Beautifully prepared close up cows ready to hit the herd producing.

## Issues on millet and other Autumn crops & ryegrass staggers warning...

Millet and crop blends are currently in the final stages of grazing. The dry weather has caused moisture stress in crops and the plants have responded by producing large amounts of endophytes and spores that are causing often very severe photo/facial eczema in milkers and young stock. Please call your tech rep and discuss if you are having issues as we can help!

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Autumn is also proving to be a bad time this year for ryegrass staggers in young stock/far off dry cows on pasture. Humid conditions and some irregular rainfall means that the old "Vic Ryegrass" cultivars will produce endophytes due to pasture stress and then the staggers arrive.

We are already seeing some issues in young heifers on turnout blocks who have been encouraged to eat into the crown of the pasture where the endophyte is concentrated. Browns stock a waterproof loose lick with a mycotoxin binder added that will stop the symptoms. While it will not "cure" cattle already affected- the vitamins and minerals in it will assist repair and the binder stops further cases.



## Pest attacks!

We are seeing some pest attack on newly emerging pastures in West and South Gippsland at the moment. Emerging pasture should be checked/monitored every 4 days at this time and if you haven't sprayed yet, then add in a pest spray if there is evidence of lucerne flea, red legged earth mites & red headed cockchafers. For those in South Gippsland (Yarram, Toora etc) you may need flippers!



## Hay Report

We are seeing some small amounts of quality protein hay moving into Gippsland currently. Pricing for Lucerne and Vetch hay has remained steady with not a lot of demand. Good quality protein hay is still available in the form of Lucerne, Vetch and Clover hays, which are all shedded and had little to no rain during curing.

Good quality cereal hay is starting to move into Gippsland, mainly in the form of Oaten hay and small amounts of Wheaten hay. We are sourcing good quality cereal hays from shed in Northern Victoria and South Australia. We currently have good quality Oaten and Wheaten hay available for immediate delivery.

For pricing on your fodder needs call the office and speak to Cameron Brown.

*Director, Cameron Brown*

## Grain Report

We have seen good rain in the most of Australia's grain growing areas especially on the Eastern sea board, this will be favorable to planting the 2021/22 crop over the next month as soil moisture levels are good.

With grain exports still at high for the time being, hopefully within a few months when crops are in the ground and export demand eases we should see grain prices come down as we move towards harvest.

On a good note, maize prices are looking like they will be lower than last year as harvest gets near.

*Director, Chris Brown*