

Lakeland RumiSmart Sustain: The Smart Solution for Profitable Ruminant Nutrition

By Alan Hurst, Lakeland Dairies Agribusiness

In an effort to meet the requirements of its feed customers to increase farm profitability through sustainable means, Lakeland Dairies Agribusiness division have developed Lakeland RumiSmart Sustain.

Lakeland RumiSmart Sustain is a new fully integrated feeding system designed to get more out of the key resources present on our farms, which in turn will increase efficiencies and therefore profitability at farm level. This new comprehensive programme focuses on the five key components responsible for delivering productivity and efficiency at farm level, namely soils, forage production, nutrient supply management, rumen function and animal health.

As this point, it's worth considering the fact that our most efficient grassland farmers are growing and utilising in excess of 12 tonnes of Dry Matter per hectare, yet our national average for the utilisation of grass is only 7.5 tonnes of Dry Matter / hectare. Based on this relevant statistic, it's quite clear that there's significant scope for improvement in this key driver of profitability on many of our dairy, beef and sheep farms. For that reason, SoilSmart and ForageSmart have been designed and will combine to address all the key factors associated with the productivity of our soils.

In SoilSmart we take a more detailed look at the chemical, physical and biological properties of the soils and introduce practices such as physical aeration of soils and the treatment of slurry where required, to increase the production potential of our soils. These treatments used in conjunction with the correct interpretation of soil analysis will ensure the most efficient use of fertiliser and organic manures present on our farms.

In the ForageSmart component, we examine the composition of our grassland swards and provide guidance on practices which include grassland reseeding, targeted weed control programmes and the use of grass measurement, budgeting and allocation in order to maximise the productivity and utilisation of our grassland swards.

The NutriSmart component of our system has been designed to supply the optimum level of nutrients to each category of ruminant animal and avoid wastage of energy, protein and minerals. To this end, we are now formulating diets to PDI and UFL in an effort to fully synchronise protein and energy digestion. To help achieve higher feed efficiencies, we are also measuring and monitoring Feed Efficiency at farm level. On this important metric, it's worth noting that every 0.1 move in Feed Efficiency in a dairy herd is worth approximately €100 / cow / year.

The RumiSmart component of the system has been designed to provide ideal rumen conditions for the most effective digestion and absorption of all nutrients supplied to the various categories of ruminant animals. To help achieve this goal we are using yeasts, buffers where required, and our unique blends of RumiSmart essential oils in our high spec beef and dairy rations.

In the HealthSmart component of the system, we are working in conjunction with veterinarians to improve animal health at farm level which will ultimately lead to higher productivity and improved profitability per animal. In HealthSmart we are using various

diagnostic techniques to identify disease pressures and / or the presence of parasites which may be having a negative effect on animal performance. We also carry out forage and milk mineral analysis to help identify any mineral imbalances that may exist, and use our high spec mineral packages to help overcome those challenges.

Working together as a fully integrated feeding system, Lakeland RumiSmart Sustain will improve efficiencies through sustainable means, which in turn will deliver increased profitability at farm level.

For more information on this exciting new system , please talk to your local Lakeland Dairies Feed Representative or contact our Farm Services centre on 1890 47 47 20 (ROI) or 028 30262311 (NI).