

TECHNICAL NEWS



July/August 2020 | NI Version

Don't underestimate the benefits of reseeding

Alan Hurst, Lakeland Agri, Technical and Product Manager

Grass reseeding is one of the best paying investments on a livestock farm, with a payback in under two years on dairy farms. Newly reseeded swards are more responsive to fertiliser and are more digestible, resulting in improved livestock performance.

Benefits of a new reseed versus old permanent pasture:

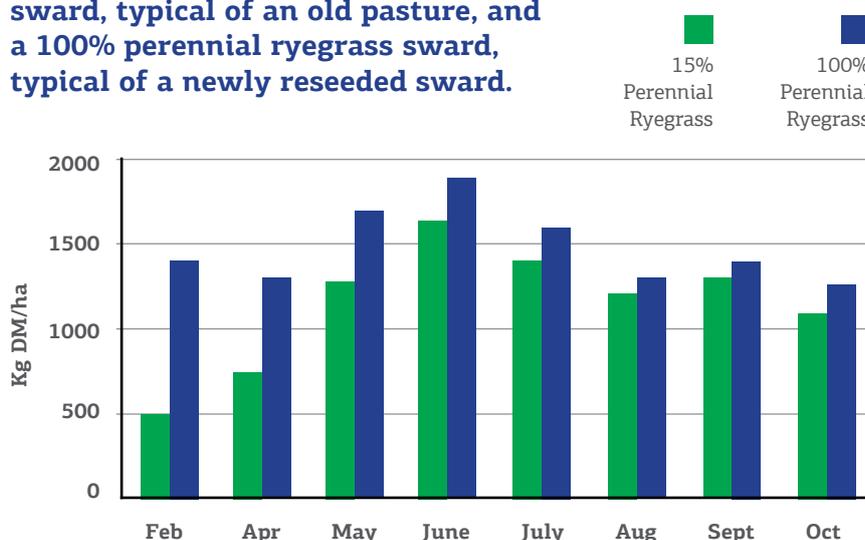
- Increased sward digestibility (higher animal performance)
- Increased sward productivity (30% more grass annually)
- More responsive to nitrogen (+24%)
- Significantly higher level of grass growth in spring (See Figure 1)

As seen from Figure 1, the dry matter production is also vastly superior in the shoulders of the year in a newly reseeded sward, exactly when the farm needs it.

Plan in advance

Now is an ideal time to plan for any remaining paddocks that need to be reseeded in 2020. Paddocks with low levels of perennial ryegrass may have been identified as underperforming over the last number of seasons. Recent soil tests should be checked for any underlying soil fertility issues to ensure the perennial ryegrass gets established properly and survives in the sward going forward. All grassland earmarked for reseeding should be burned off with a suitable glyphosate-based product (Round Up or Gallup). Aim to have all reseeding completed by the end of August, to allow sufficient time to control weeds if present and/or grazed with light stock before closing for the winter. This will help promote tillering in the new sward.

Figure 1: Production difference between a 15% perennial ryegrass sward, typical of an old pasture, and a 100% perennial ryegrass sward, typical of a newly reseeded sward.



Our 2020 grass seed mixtures:

At Lakeland Agri, our aim is to supply the highest performing grass seed mixtures to our milk suppliers and feed customers. They include:

- LFS Cut and Graze - Formulated to maximise yield, quality and persistency when used for silage but also to provide a high quality sward when used for grazing.
- LFS High Density - Designed to perform and persist in the more challenging soil types.
- LFS Intensive Grazing - Excellent spring and autumn growth. Formulated to deliver a highly digestible sward across the entire grazing season.
- For more information on any of the above grass seed mixtures, visit www.lakeland.ie/agribusiness/grass-seed-mixtures



GRASS SEED DELIVERY

Avail of our direct delivery to farms, with **free delivery available** on orders of **10 bags or more**.

For more information on autumn reseeding or to choose a suitable grass seed mixture from the Lakeland Agri Range, please visit www.lakeland.ie, contact your local

Lakeland Agri sales representative or call our Customer Service Centre on **028 3026 2311**.

Robotics hitting the mark for this Co. Armagh farm family

Farming outside Portadown, Co. Armagh, father and son team, Paul and Stuart Lyness' history of milk production is not a long one, but looking at their farm performance, one would believe they were at it their entire lifetime.

Having entered milk production in 2017, they saw only one route for their farm, and that was robotic milking. Under the guidance of Lely Center Eglis, they installed two Lely A4 milking robots. From the start, it was decided to house the herd full-time and feed silage using a multi-cut system, with the aim to cut at least 3 times per year to achieve quality forage.

Current farm performance:

Over the past 3 seasons, the herd has grown to 102 cows, with 87 currently milking. The target is to have 110 cows milking on the two robots at all times, and roughly 20 cows dry, leaving them with a target of 130 cows.

Current farm performance is 34kg of milk on average, at 3.98 butterfat and 3.18 protein. This is achieved from an average concentrate input of 7kg of the high specification, **Lakeland Agri Supercream 18% Nut**, along with 32kg of grass silage (a mixture of 1st, 2nd and 3rd) and 6 kg blend through the diet feeder.

Last season, the herd sold 9,100 litres/cow on roughly 3.4 tonnes of concentrate feeding, meaning they returned 2300 litres from forage. They also had a calving interval of roughly 415 days, which has since reduced by 2 weeks to currently sit at 401 days. **By the end of this year or early 2021, Stuart believes they will hit their target of 10,000 litres sold/cow, which will equate to 3,200 litres from forage as the increase in milk sold will have come without any additional concentrate fed. This significantly highlights the performance capabilities of this herd, and the drive of the management team.**

Benefits of TMS Programme

David Beacom, Lakeland Agri Sales Representative and Christopher Cahill, Lakeland Agri Technical & Nutritional Support representative have been an integral part of the team since the Lyness' conversion to dairy. Over the past 12-18 months the Lyness' have also joined the Lakeland Agri/Premier



Stuart Lyness

Nutrition **Transition Management System** which entails **TMS assessor, Shannon Porter**, visiting the farm once per month to assess areas such as **body condition score, rumen fill, lameness and hock hygiene** of all dry and fresh cows and heifers. The TMS programme has helped to ensure that the cows transition well, with minimal disruption from dry cows to milking cows, and subsequently get back in calf earlier.

Stuart had the following to say on their journey into robotic milking;

“ By placing a greater emphasis on making quality forage and breeding our own replacements to the highest standards, we have been able to significantly increase the output of the herd over the past number of seasons. We have tried reducing the open days between calving and submission, which has helped reduce our calving interval, something the Lakeland TMS programme has significantly helped with.

The Lakeland Agri team have played a valuable part in our team moving forward. David has been supplying top quality feed since we started milking, and the Lakeland Agri technical team are very involved at regular intervals, running diet plans as forages change and checking in on the settings of the robot to ensure we are achieving maximum performance from the herd. We would recommend them to anyone who wants to maximise herd performance, especially for their knowledge on the robotic milking systems. ”

For farms striving to maximise performance through robotic milking systems, we would encourage you to utilise the technical expertise and quality product range available from Lakeland Agri.



Shannon Porter, TMS Assessor

TMS Insights: Preparation for next lactation has major impact on cow performance

Dr. Andrew Pine, Ruminant Director, Premier Nutrition.

The health and condition of dry cows as they transition into lactation has a massive impact on their future production performance, health and fertility. For Northern Irish milk suppliers to Lakeland Dairies, the **Transition Management System (TMS)**, developed by Premier Nutrition 18 months ago has shown that better preparation of cows during this critical dry period has a **dramatic impact on production of milk and milk solids**.

TMS evaluates the impact of a variety of challenges to transition success including physical factors (e.g. body condition score or BCS) metabolic problems (e.g. milk fever) and environmental conditions (e.g. stocking rate). In a recent review of TMS data from 2018/19, with assessments of over 68,000 dry and 86,000 fresh cows, some fascinating outcomes have been seen.

Body Condition Score

As might be expected, the development of a transition problem, such as milk fever, will have a significant impact on a cow's ability to achieve her **peak yield potential**. **A retained placenta reduces this by 4 litres, while the risk of ketosis could reduce peaks by as much as 14 litres**. Keeping these problems to a minimum can be helped by ensuring that cows are in the correct body condition score (BCS) as they approach calving. Fatter cows (BCS >3.5) are more at risk of milk fever and a displaced abomasum, while thin cows (BCS <3) are more at risk of retaining their placenta and developing metritis.

Not surprisingly, **pre-calving BCS** will also influence peak production of milk and milk solids and on average, **thinner cows (<2.75 BCS) produce nearly 3kg less milk at peak**. As a result, Premier Nutrition has set their ideal BCS target at 3-3.25. Unfortunately, from the data review, over 1/3 of dry cows are outside this target range.



For more information on the Lakeland Transition Management System programme, please contact Alan Hurst on 00353 87 2901663 or the Lakeland Agri Customer Services Centre on 028 30262311.

WHAT IS RUMEN FILL?

Look at the triangle between hooks & the short ribs.



Rumen Fill

Poor rumen fill in dry cows not only dramatically increases the risk of all the transition diseases but it also reduces peak milk and milk solid yields by as much as 4 litres. It is disappointing that over 40% of pre-calving cows are at risk of this yield reduction, being lower than the TMS target rumen fill of 4.

Chronic lameness, particularly in dry cows, is something we should have zero tolerance for. However, the TMS survey has shown that, on average, **5 out of every 100 dry cows are chronically lame during the dry and or fresh periods**, with some herds having regular chronic lameness at almost 18%. Lame dry cows tend to be thin, lose more BCS, have a higher incidence of metabolic diseases and produce less milk and milk solids.

Hock Hygiene Score

One parameter that Premier Nutrition hasn't investigated before but has been collecting the data since TMS was started 6 years ago, is the impact of **Hock Hygiene score (HH)** on fresh cow performance. This is an assessment of the cleanliness of the back feet and legs using a 1 - 5 scale, with 1 being clean and 5 heavily contaminated. While the current analysis of the data doesn't support the original hypothesis considered for HH, it appears that **cows with cleaner feet and legs produce more milk at peak** than those considered dirtier, with a very strong negative correlation, and as much as a **3 litre difference**. While the reasons behind this difference remain to be established, one suggestion is that it might be linked to improved cow comfort in cleaner cows.

From the analysis of the TMS data, we now know that nearly 1.3 million dry cows may be open to substantial challenges in their transition into milk, over 500,000 may have a poor BCS, over 100,000 are chronically lame and 600,000 will have poor rumen fills. **These factors combined will obviously impact cow welfare, reduce longevity and stretch farm profits**. However, all can be improved by the use of key management and nutrition techniques and it's never too late to start.

Benefits of feeding weanlings in late summer

Christopher Cahill, Lakeland Agri, Technical & Nutritional Support Representative

The success to any suckler calf-to-weanling or indeed finishing system will be maximising performance from excellent quality grass. There is a period throughout the year where good quality grass can support more than 1kg of live-weight gain, however, as the year moves on grass quality begins to decline.

The key to maintaining performance with your weanlings is the quality of the feed used in conjunction with the grass. It is well documented that even with good quality grass at the forefront of the weanling's diet, the inclusion of a good quality calf/weanling ration can provide a 2:1 return on investment.

When selling weanlings, buyers like to see a well-grown quality animal, and likewise if finishing the animal, it is important to grow the animal while they are young as it is the most cost-effective time to do so. When paired with good quality grazed grass, a weanling's response to concentrates can be as high as 4:1, i.e. for every 4kg concentrate input = 1kg live-weight gain output. Comparing this to an older animal trying to gain weight over the winter-housed period, the response to concentrate can be as low as 6-7:1.



The **Lakeland Agri Super Weanling Pellet** is 16 % crude protein, with protein derived from soyabean meal. The **Lakeland Agri Super Weanling Pellet** is also extremely energy dense, utilising **barley** and **maize** as its energy sources. It also has added **yeast** and **essential oils** to aid in maintaining optimum rumen function to drive performance, and finally, it contains a **high-spec mineral package** to ensure that the mineral demands of the weanling are met regardless of the mineral status of the sward, and even in the presence of mineral antagonists. When compared to coarse rations, the Lakeland Agri Super Weanling Pellet has less issues with birds (less waste), and ensures that each mouthful of feed that the animal consumes is perfectly balanced.

£20
/tonne off RRP

on Lakeland Agri's Super Weanling Pellet
between 5th July and 5th September 2020.

SPECIAL OFFER : Super Weanling Pellet

+1 KG LIVE-WEIGHT GAIN

Potential conversions
4 kg Super Weanling Pellet fed to young actively growing weanlings delivers an extra 1 kg of live-weight gain

2:1

Very High Return on Investment (2:1) £2 worth of live-weight gain for every £1 spent on the Super Weanling Pellet



Produces a Stronger Animal
A premium quality animal that will achieve premium market price

Super Weanling Pellet Key Features:

- Consistent Nutrient Supply
- High Quality Starch & Protein Sources
- Very High Energy Density
- Rumen Enhancers
- Unique Mineral Package

For more information, please contact your Lakeland Agri sales representative or call our Customer Services Centre on 028 30262311

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Delivering Sustainable Feeding Solutions