

Welcome to Milk Matters, Harbro's newsletter for Scotland's progressive dairy farmers. Now that cows are settled on their winter rations, we look at challenging them to ensure that they are performing at their peak. In addition to silage additives and a new footbath, we also look at how valuable dairy costings can be as a management tool. If you are visiting AgriScot, please join us for hospitality - our stand is adjacent to the judging ring.

Dairy enterprise costings - complete the jigsaw

The UK dairy industry is currently facing some of its toughest and most challenging times. With relatively low milk prices, increased fertiliser costs and at times, uninspiring weather, this year has been one of mountains to climb.

Over the last 12-18 months, many dairy farmers have seen their milk price drop by as much as five pence. Input costs such as the three Fs - fuel, feeds and fertiliser have become increasingly volatile in the world markets. This can make dairy farming with a profit on a knife edge. As farmers, you know that to make your business successful, you must plan - whether it be to maintain your position or to allow expansion within your own farm business.

But no planning is complete unless you monitor progress. Simply looking at the monthly bank statement, annual accounts or daily bulk milk tank slip - whilst assisting in managing the dairy unit - are not reliable or sufficiently up-to-date to enable precise, balanced and considered decisions to be made. Many dairy farmers run two or three farm enterprises e.g. dairy, beef and arable with one current bank account and one set of financial accounts. This makes it difficult to drill down and focus on any one of these enterprises, as everything goes into "one pot".

Many dairy units use milk recording systems whether it be their own computerised milk meters or a monthly recording service such as that offered by Cattle Information Services (CIS). There is no doubt that this information forms part of the jigsaw, but does not give the whole picture when it comes to financial and physical performance.

Free service

To assist its dairy customers to focus on their dairy enterprise and complete the jigsaw, Harbro offers a free, confidential dairy costing service.

With basic information supplied by you from the milk statement, feed invoices, movement and calving records, a comprehensive monthly dairy costing report can be produced which can then be used as a management aid for future planning and meeting performance targets. Information such as feed rate, feed cost per litre, margin over purchased feed, average milk yield and milk quality are some of the categories which are reported. This allows the dairy costing to be an important, disciplined management tool.

Comparisons and benchmarking with industry-wide data enables your business to set achievable targets

within an agreed time frame. But it is the focus that this puts on your dairy enterprise that allows you to make well planned decisions going forward.

If you would like to discuss how dairy enterprise costings could help your business, contact your Harbro Dairy Specialist or visit the Harbro stand at AgriScot.

* Not to scale

DAIRY COSTINGS SERVICE		Harbro			
Private and Confidential		QUALITY LIVESTOCK NUTRITION			
Name of Farm	Monthly Totals		Year Ending		
	Sep 2009	Sep 2008	Sep 2009	Sep 2008	
Cow Summary					
1. Cows in Herd	208	219	217	219	
2. Cows in Milk	172	185	172	178	
3. Percentage Dry	17	16	21	19	
4. Cows Calved	6	21	141	159	
5. Cows & Heifers Brought in	8	24	38	54	
6. Cows Culled	13	4	63	44	
Production Summary					
7. Milk Sold (Litres)	114655	116788	1490984	1515880	
8. Milk Retained (Litres)	4500	4500	54750	62525	
9. Butterfat %	4.31	4.30	4.09	4.15	
10. Protein %	3.43	3.29	3.37	3.36	
11. Cell Count	172	221	175	206	
12. Total Bacterial Count	46	44	43	48	
13. Milk Price per Litre	23.422	28.252	23.825	25.501	
14. Total Value of Milk Sold	26854.47	32994.83	355221.90	386568.30	
Feed Summary					
15. Tonnes Dairy Cake Fed	27.12	29.94	345.38	316.44	
16. Cost of Dairy Cake per Tonne	201.00	219.00	205.58	207.83	
17. Dairy Cake Fed (Kgs / Litre)	0.23	0.25	0.22	0.20	
18. Total Other Concentrates Fed	8.19	6.00	134.46	120.64	
19. Cost of Other Concentrates Fed per Tonne	155.61	216.00	186.39	182.53	
20. Other Concentrates Fed (Kgs / Litre)	0.07	0.05	0.09	0.08	
21. Total Concentrates Fed (Tonnes)	35.31	35.94	479.84	437.08	
22. Total Concentrates Cost / Tonne	190.47	218.50	200.20	200.85	
23. Total Concentrates Fed (Kgs / Litre)	0.30	0.30	0.31	0.28	
24. Total Concentrates Cost	6725.57	7852.86	96065.80	87786.58	
25. Total Purchased Bulk Feeds	39.00	28.50	365.64	554.52	
26. Cost of Purchased Bulk Feeds per Tonne	39.50	65.00	52.80	48.94	
27. % of Milk Income spent on Conc & Purchased Feed	30.78	29.41	32.34	29.73	
28. Margin over Concentrates	20128.91	25141.97	259156.10	298781.70	
29. Margin over Concs & Purchased Feed	18588.41	23289.47	240325.70	271642.50	
Management Summary					
30. Milk Yield per Cow (Litres)	573	554	7126	7205	
31. Daily Yield Per Cow in Milk (Litres)	23.09	21.85	24.63	24.25	
32. Milk from Forage (litres)	8.08	7.68	7.82	9.49	
33. Total Concentrates Fed per Cow	169.76	164.11	2212.10	1995.04	
34. Margin over Concentrates per Cow	96.77	114.80	1194.73	1363.78	
35. Margin over Conc and Purchased Feed per Cow	89.37	106.34	1107.92	1239.91	
36. Margin over Conc and Purchased Feed per Litre	15.60	19.20	15.55	17.21	
37. Feed Cost per Litre	7.82	9.05	8.28	8.29	
Comments:					

Software by:
farmdata
Tel: 01467 671457

Challenge your cows

Once cows are housed and settled on their winter diet, it is the ideal time to challenge them. That is exactly what Harbro has been doing with two products in particular, Mycosorb and Rumenpro – and for the last few years, the results have been very encouraging.

Starting the winter ration with the same feed additives as last year is not always economically sound. Not every year is the same and therefore, you don't know if you are getting an economic benefit from the additive. It is best to start with a balanced base ration and then challenge the cow, although there is an argument for high yielding dairy cows which are receiving a lot of concentrates/acidic silage that the base winter diet should always include a rumen buffer like Alkacid and a live yeast such as Yea-Sacc.

Mycosorb

Mycosorb is a mycotoxin binder. Mycotoxins are present in all feedstuffs to a varying degree and are not all visible. Typical signs of a mycotoxin challenge are;

- lower than expected milk yield
- high somatic cell counts
- swollen hocks
- loose dung

If you feel any of the above may be underpinning your cows' performance, why not take the Mycosorb Challenge.



Feed 100g/head/day for 10 days then 50g/head/day for 10 days - monitor performance with your Harbro Sales Specialist and continue if there is an economic benefit. When any changes are made to the diet e.g. moving from first cut to second cut silage, cows should be challenged again.

Rumenpro

Rumenpro is a combination of energy and rumen protein. This product tends to be a hit one year and a miss the next. Last year we saw great responses from cows on it and indications are that this year is going to be the same. If you have the winter diet settled but feel there is something missing or cows are not quite milking as expected then try feeding 0.5-1.0Kg/head/day of Rumenpro. Within five days, you should know if it is going to be a hit with your cows. Please contact your Harbro Sales Specialist for more information.

Gilmour wins prestigious award

Harbro customer, Gilmour Lawrie lifted a prestigious trophy for his award winning Brieryside herd of Ayrshires at the Dairy Event & Livestock Show held at Stoneleigh in September.

Gilmour who farms 1100 acres with 250 cows in partnership with his brother Jim at Sandyford, Monkton, Ayrshire was awarded the Murchland Perpetual Trophy for the highest placed Ayrshire herd in the RABDF Gold Cup competition. The Brieryside herd is currently the third highest yielding Ayrshire herd in Scotland and has seven out of the top ten highest yielding heifers.

Exceptional

The Dairy Event attracts farmers from across the UK and Ireland and Gilmour successfully beat off competition from over 1000 herds after demonstrating exceptional genetic merit,

herd health and management skills including cleanliness and profitability.

An elated Gilmour said "I am honoured to win this prestigious award and am very proud of our Brieryside Herd at Sandyford Farm. Winning this national award provides recognition for all the hard work and investment made in the business over the years."

Harbro supplies all the feed inputs to both herds which include calf feeds, a mineralised dairy meal for mixing with on-farm cereals and their top of the range parlour dairy compound. "We also use Energizer Gold protected fat for our high yielding group and Harbro's unique rumen buffer, Alkacid to optimise a healthy rumen environment and minimise the risk of acidosis. We also incorporate a mycotoxin binder, Mycosorb as standard in the PMR mix," said Gilmour.

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Gilmour Lawrie being presented with the trophy by Lyndon Edwards (right), Chairman of the RABDF

Silage additive offers 4:1 investment return: R&D findings

Dairy producers will be able to make higher quality forage and subsequently improve yields by up to 4.4% by applying a carefully chosen additive to their grass silage this coming season, according to findings from a trial originally carried out at Wye College. This yield improvement works out at an additional margin of more than £52.00 or an investment return of 4:1.

Harbro Dominator delivers 2 million Lactobacillus plantarum bacteria per gram of forage treated – the most concentrated product on the market. In a trial, two grass silages were taken from a third year grass ley – a mix of tetraploid and diploid ryegrasses plus clover. After cutting

on 11 May and picking up two days later with a self propelled precision chop forage harvester, half the forage was treated with Lactobacillus plantarum additive at a rate of two litres/tonne. The remainder acted as a control.

Fed on ad-lib basis

The silages were clamped outdoors and fed to the herd on an ad lib basis on housing. The cows were also fed supplementary concentrate. The two silages' analyses showed little difference, apart from the treated which had a higher ME of 11.0 MJ/kg, compared with 10.7 MJ/kg for the untreated.

While intakes of both silages were relatively high, there was no significant difference in intake between the treated and untreated. However, the cows fed the treated silage yielded an average 1.3l/day more than those fed the untreated, and their combined milk fat and protein yield was 5% higher. See table 1. Furthermore, the cows fed the treated silage stayed in better condition.

"The improved yield performance from cows fed the treated silage reflects the silage's higher digestibility and a better utilisation of the digested nutrient," explains Harbro ruminant nutritionist Matt Palmer.

"While feed and fertiliser costs continue to escalate, it may be tempting to cut corners and make compromises this season, however it's a decision farmers cannot afford to make when it comes to investing in a silage additive. Applying a silage additive proven to supply sufficient bacteria, like Harbro Dominator, can bring a return of 4:1 on milk yield alone, a figure which will contribute to offsetting those higher input costs."

Table 1: Dairy cow performance: additive treated grass silage vs untreated

	Treated Silage	Untreated Silage
Milk Yield (litres/day)	30.9	29.6
Fat Yield (kg/day)	1.33	1.28
Protein Yield (kg/day)	0.94	0.88
Cow liveweight (kg)	635	631

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"The technical support I receive from Harbro's regional sales manager Neil Kidd is an important factor in achieving optimum herd performance to maximise profitability. We sit down monthly and review the CIS reports available from the website and alter the ration accordingly from any forage changes, urea levels, dung texture, etc. It is a three way partnership between the genetics of my cows, the on-farm management and Harbro's nutritional back up and feed input," he concluded.

To monitor changes, grass and maize silages are regularly tested using Harbro's Bioparametric analysis. Rations are then formulated with the leading Bioparamilk programme.

The last milk recording took place on October 27th 2009 and all cows were recorded. The average was 29.6 litres, 4.23% butterfat, 3.35% protein, SCC 109, Bactoscan 23 and urea 0.034.



Harbro Dominator Silage additive – the only additive with 2 million bugs!

Early order offer! – Place your order in November or December and receive a discount of 5p on every tonne treated plus for every 500 tonnes of silage treated, receive a Casio G-Shock Resistant watch. Ask your Harbro sales specialist for more details.

The smartest footbath for the modern dairy farmer

One of the biggest problems of footbaths is that they quickly become polluted with manure and the last cows are walking through a contaminated footbath. The Intra Bath will solve this problem! 60% of the manure falls through the middle grill, therefore, the Intra Bath is much more effective than a traditional footbath.

Visit our stand at AgriScot and see the revolutionary Hoofcare treatment system from Intracare, exclusive to Harbro in Scotland.



From a walkable slurry crust to an injectable mix!

As stock head for the sheds, that means more slurry and the annual trials and tribulations of managing this liquid asset.

"You could have walked over the top of



"Epizym saves me time and money" says Ian Evans of Penkiln, Newton Stewart.

the crust in our tower" – it almost sounds like a boast, but dairy farmer Ian Evans of Penkiln, Newton Stewart, is glad to be talking in the past tense.

"When I would mix it up, the dirty water would come out okay, but floor solids were left behind." It was then he tackled the problem with Epizym, a slurry additive from Harbro.



Epizym contains natural bacteria which are activated when mixed with water, and added to the liquid fraction of stored slurry. Using slurry as a food source, the bacteria produce a more liquid and homogenous mix, capture ammonia and reduce odours.

"I applied the product as per the instructions. The smell was greatly reduced when spreading and the slurry was far more consistent, leaving much less solid material on the leaves of the grass," said Ian, who has

a 350,000 gallon slurry tower, plus under slat tanks for 230 cows.

"I have saved time and money on pumps. It would take a while and I used to hire in specialist mixing equipment. I haven't had to hire this in since using Epizym. I would, and have been recommending Epizym, he said.

Cowman's Tips

Mixer Wagon Tips to ensure quality rations:

Research has shown that over 85% of farm mixed dairy rations are poorly mixed and/or sorted by the cows resulting in reduced animal performance.

To ensure that your cows receive the same diet which has been formulated;

- Follow the correct order of loading into the wagon - this can be different for each farm situation.
- Mix for the appropriate time, usually 10-15 minutes – avoid over-mixing.
- Check ration for sorting – take samples of the ration 4-6 hours after feeding and compare with samples taken directly after mixing.
- Service and check weigh scales regularly.
- Do not overfill the mixer as this reduces mix quality.

Cubicle Hygiene Tips

1. Use Biosuper in your cubicles at least three times per week
2. Spread it on top of fresh bedding, not underneath - this saves product and also makes sure the Biosuper makes contact with the udder
3. 15 years of research has gone in to perfecting the formulation of Biosuper ensuring that it delivers results on the farm



Harbro
QUALITY LIVESTOCK NUTRITION

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