



## **CONSIDER SUPPLEMENTARY NUTRITION NOW FOR PREGNANT STOCK ON WET WINTER PASTURES**

Grass is still growing on many farms as 2014 kicks off with more of the mild, stormy weather that characterised the end of 2013. So much so that grazing may look abundant at the moment, but low dry matter winter pasture is not enough to sustain optimum cattle and sheep performance, warns Rumenco.

“In many areas of the country rainfall has been so substantial that out-wintering sheep and beef cattle are grazing nothing more than ‘green water’. Grass may look plentiful at the moment, but it is typically extremely wet and of low quality,” says Rumenco technical manager David Thornton.

Mr Thornton points out that most of the pasture on offer currently contains more than 85% moisture and pregnant cattle and sheep may not be able to consume enough dry matter to meet intake and nutrient demands.

“It may seem counterintuitive to put hay out when grass seems abundant, but this will help boost dry matter intake on wet pastures. Hay will also decrease the rate at which forage passes through the ruminant digestive system, which will help stock make the most of what forage is available to them.”

He also advocates the benefits of blocks or buckets as the optimum supplementary nutrient delivery system in wet grazing situations, in preference to trough feeding.

“Continued wet weather certainly adversely affects nutrient uptake from grazing so to have a concentrated energy, protein, vitamins and minerals source on offer makes sense. But bear in mind that mud around troughs can also affect feeding behaviour. Poached areas create a suction effect on the hooves of cattle making it hard for them to move around feeders. And if you are travelling out to trough feed every day the ground will be churned up even more.”

He also adds that at this time of year it's not great for pregnant livestock to be competing aggressively for nuts as soon as you arrive with the feedbag.

“Blocks and buckets offer a much calmer, less labour intensive supplementary feeding solution, as well as being the peace of mind option in wet conditions because they also promote better foraging behaviour and forage utilisation. Rumevite feed blocks are a especially good value for money supplement option at this time of year for pregnant ewes in mid-gestation needing to develop the placental tissues necessary for a successful lambing, particularly in these wet, low dry matter grass conditions. This is because they offer a more substantial nutritional contribution than low intake bucket-based supplements,” he says.

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**Picture supplied:**

Some pastures are so waterlogged currently that stock are effectively grazing green water.

**Note to editors**

1. Rumenco is a market leader in the ruminant feed supplement market. It is a successful company with strong brands. The well-established Rumevite, Supalyx and Lifeline products, in particular, are trusted and valued by livestock farmers in the UK. The company has forged robust partnership relationships with the agricultural merchant trade based on its branded products and contract manufacture.

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