



SUPPLEMENT LOW DRY MATTER AUTUMN GRASS AND EXTEND GRAZING SEASON TO CUT HIGH STRAW BEDDING COSTS

The late summer grazing conditions have been typically good around the UK this year because of timely summer rainfall and plentiful sunshine hours. But cattle growth rates are now being compromised because livestock are struggling to ingest enough forage dry matter with the onset of autumn conditions, nutritionists warn.

“Grass is the cheapest feed on the farm at around 1p/kg DM, so it’s well worth making the most of it. But at this time of year many grazing pastures are too wet and this means growing cattle are simply not getting enough nutrition from the forage on offer,” reports David Thornton from Rumenco.

Many cattle producers will now be thinking about supplementary feeding, but concentrates will not be the best option for a number of reasons, he argues.

“Even small amounts of concentrates can cause substitution of what grass DM is available, simply because the rumen bugs needed to ferment either pasture fibre or starch from concentrates are quite different. The rumen can go out of synchrony and the result is expensive and disappointing performance,” David Thornton points out.

Rumenco says feed block enquiries are running at record levels for the time of the year, but this is not surprising.

“A lot of trial work has been done to look at feeding Rumevite blocks to cattle with grass over the summer grazing period. The benefits are now well documented and include an improved mean liveweight gain of 0.24kg per day over grazing alone.

“The blocks also help suckler producers, in particular, make the most of the available grass and boost weaning weights, as well as offering easy-feed convenience and crucial magnesium cover for the usual autumn staggers threat.”



Mr Thornton adds that block consumption closely matches grass availability and this ensures less performance variation between cattle. And this makes it easier for producers to sell even batches of weaned calves.

“What’s more, on drier farms, using Rumevite feed blocks in the autumn can help to shorten the winter housed period, thereby saving on bedding material. With bought-in straw currently costing around £60 per tonne and with every beast needing around 5kg per day of bedding straw, the saving on straw alone more than pays for the blocks fed at grass,” he says.

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Picture supplied:

With the onset of autumn conditions cattle will now struggle to eat enough forage dry matter to sustain growth targets.

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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