



Limited Silage Stocks & Poor Grass Supply – What are the Options?

1. Prioritise whatever grass is available for milking cows and maiden.
2. This spring maiden heifers are lighter than expected so it is important to supplement maiden heifers to achieve target weight at breeding.
3. Feed dairy cows to Dry Matter Intake to ensure adequate energy is being supplied to sustain yield and milk solids. Increase meals in parlour or diet feeder to overcome shortage of grass or silage in the diet. It is important that the total diet is balanced correctly to ensure that the maximum peak yield is achieved. Underfeeding of cows will lower the peak milk yield that is achieved causing a loss in milk yield over the total lactation.
4. All livestock require a minimum amount of forage as grass, grass silage, maize silage or straw to ensure that the rumen functions correctly. Use Table 1 to calculate the amount of silage/straw required on your farm depending on grass supply and forage available.
5. Purchase minimum amounts of silage as meals offer best value for money on a DM basis.
6. Assess value of silage and alternative feeds against meals.

Table 1 Options for Feeding Minimum Silage/Straw and Additional Meals

Type of Livestock	OPTION 1		OPTION 2		OPTION 3	
	Grass Silage	Meal	Grass Silage (GS) + Straw	Meal	Straw Ad-lib	Meal
Weanlings 350 Kgs	12 Kgs	4 Kgs 14% CP	6 Kgs GS 1 Kg Straw	4.5 Kgs 16% CP	Ad-lib	5 Kgs 16% CP
Stores 450 Kgs	15 Kgs	4.5 Kgs 14% CP	10 Kgs GS 1 Kg Straw	5.0 Kgs 16% CP	Ad-lib	5.5 Kgs 16% CP
Dry Cows Pre-calving**	20 Kgs	2-3 Kgs 16% CP	13 Kgs GS 2 Kgs Straw	3-4 Kgs 16% CP	Ad-lib	4-5 Kgs 18% CP
Suckler cows with calves	23 Kgs	5 Kgs 16% CP	15 Kgs GS 2 Kgs Straw	6 Kgs 18% CP	Not recommended if silage is available	

**** Monitor body condition of dry cows on limited silage/straw and adjust meals**

NOTES:

- **All quantities in Table 1 are on a fresh weight basis, assuming silage is approximately 25% dry matter**
- **Balance all diets with appropriate minerals**
- **Ask advice if you are unsure of how to balance the diet**