



# DN NEWSLETTER

## issue 35

**How can we get an extra 500g of dry matter intake from our herd? That is all it takes to get an extra litre of milk production, which can have a big influence on your profitability. A number of factors will influence DMI, but it is important to identify which factors are preventing your cows from eating more DM.**

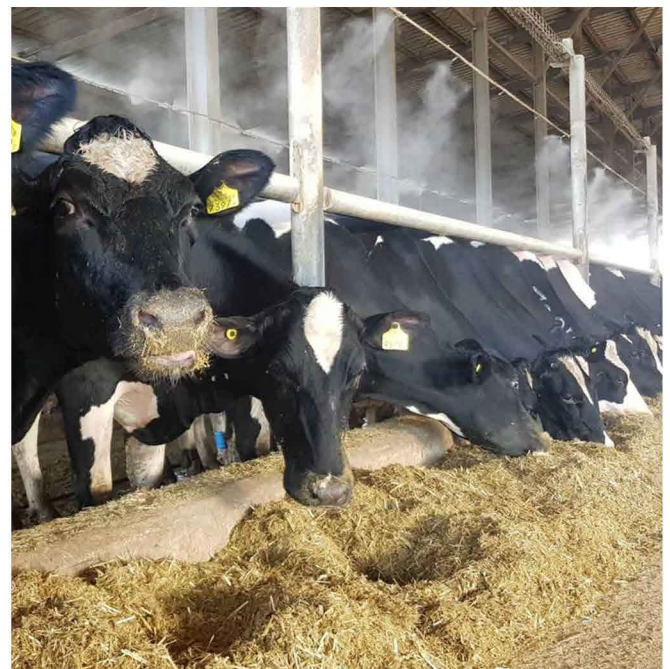
Before we explore this question further it is important that we understand that we want this extra intake to be used for the production of milk and not wasted on regaining condition in low BCS cows or in cows which have immune challenges. A healthy herd will make more use of additional DMI.

The conversion of feed into milk is a good indication of the overall health and efficiency of the herd. Feed efficiency can be calculated by dividing the milk production by the kg of DM eaten. For a healthy herd of cows between 150-225 days in milk the feed efficiency should fall somewhere between 1.5 to 1.6 kg of milk per kg of DMI. These calculations are made on an energy corrected milk basis, corrected to 3.5% butterfat 3.2% protein which allows comparisons between herds.



Much of the difference in performance between herds can be attributed to how well feed is managed in the trough, how much feed space the cows have access to and how well the daily demands for feed are being met. Quite simply, push-up feed at least every two hours, have feed available after milking or dawn and dusk, overfeed by 3-5%, and provide adequate space for all cows to eat simultaneously.

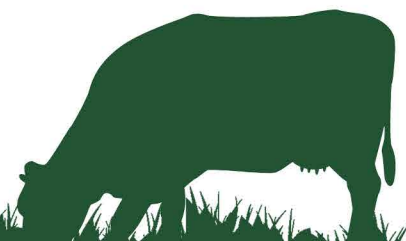
The delivery of feed should be consistent in terms of timing and with regards to the consistency of the mix. Inconsistency in feed delivery and quality will result in sorting and variation in intakes among the cows. Thoroughly chopping the long fibres and adding water to the TMR can reduce sorting



The design of the trough is also important. Focus on the height of the neck rail, the height of the feed table, which should be 10cm higher than the standing area and the condition of the feed table surface. Cows will eat more off a smooth surface.

In the winter, having adequate light levels in the shed for between 16-18 hours a day will encourage DMI and improve milk production and fertility.

Lame cows will have lower DMI, so ensure that hoof health is managed effectively through foot bathing and regular trimming. Lame cows that are reluctant to go to the bunk will quickly lose milk and body condition in order to compensate for the compromised energy intake.





Comfortable stalls are not only important from a lameness perspective but also from a DMI and rumen health perspective. Cows need to lie down following bouts of feeding in order to ruminate, produce saliva to buffer the rumen contents and produce milk

The quality of forage is also important. Poorly digestible forages will reduce rumen throughput and reduce DMI. Other negative effects on DMI include poorly fermented forages and forages contaminated with soil or spoilage organisms.

One of the major benefits of focusing on these points is that we get more regular visits to the feed trough and longer lying times which in turn is going to help improve rumen health, milk quality and DMI.



# SiloSolve® FC

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Most silage inoculants work by using bacteria to convert carbohydrates into lactic acid to reduce the pH of the silage. While this controls yeasts and moulds when the clamp is sealed, once it is open to air it provides an ideal substrate for both, so the forage can degrade quickly. This leads to wastage both in the clamp and at feeding.

On average, 27% of silage is lost between harvest and feed intake across the UK – nearly all due to oxygen.

If you can control oxygen you can create a very different silage. SiloSolve FC contains patented Oxycap® technology which removes all oxygen from the clamp in a matter of hours.



For further information about Silosolve or for any technical support or advice, please contact your local DN Sales Specialist or our Veterinary Technical Manager, Debby Brown, by emailing:

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