

We're looking forward to May and beyond with a bit more promise after what has been a relentless six months for tillage and livestock farmers. The incessant rain eventually stopped and there has been a big improvement in grounds and grazing conditions. The effects of the bad backend and spring will be felt for a long time but the sign of blue skies, some sunshine and flowering oilseed rape has lifted everyone.

### Grassland Weed Control to improve silage quality

After the long wet spring, paddocks and silage ground need to be assessed for weeds. Docks are a never-ending scourge and need to be kept under control to improve sward silage quality. Thistles can also be devastating to paddocks if ignored and early May provides the perfect opportunity to hit young growing thistles before they build up excessive roots underground. Our team is available to assess the weeds on your farm and advise on the best and most economic control methods. The more you keep on top of the problem the easier and cheaper it is to keep under control.

### Red Clover Silage Scheme

DAFM has opened the Red Clover Silage Scheme for 2024 and we have a Red Clover Silage mix available. If you are reseeded this year, this scheme is a great opportunity to incorporate a red and white clover sward on your farm. The payment is up to €300/Ha for a maximum of 20 Ha per farm. This allows the establishment of a DAFM approved grass seed mix which must include 4kgs of Red Clover per 12 kg pack. Applications are made through BISS (closing date of May 15th) and sward mix must be sown by July 15th.



### New Product Launch

ProClova XL was launched in April and we now have it in stock. The grassland industry has been waiting for this product! This new and exciting clover-safe herbicide targets key weeds in newly sown leys and established grassland.

ProClova XL...

- Has a wide application window from March to October;
- Kills weeds in newly sown leys, notably chickweed, fat-hen, redshank and seedling docks;
- Delivers the highest and most reliable control of docks in established grassland where clover preservation is key;
- Can be used on grass leys that contain red clover, if applied in the year after establishment;
- Stock can resume grazing 7 days after application (there's a 21-day cutting interval).

### Over Seeding Clover

May is an ideal time to incorporate white clover into existing swards. Clover should be broadcast or stitched into moist, warm soils and rolled for optimum results. Medium leaf clover comes in 10kg packs and should be oversown at 2-2.5 kg to the acre. This will add benefits to the sward as regards Nitrogen fixation potential and reduce reliance on fertiliser.



# Dairy Matters

April 2024 has been a busy month fielding calls regarding disappointing milk yield and low milk proteins. This year, cows were reaching peak on a silage diet and due to limited access to grass and the inclusion of poor silage quality in the diet milk yield and milk protein have been disappointing. We are here to help and advise so please discuss issues with your Bretts Technical Sales Representative.

Bretts Supreme Breeder Cubes offer a nutritional solution to minimise the extent of the butterfat drop on lush leafy grass. As standard these cubes include our Performance Improvement Pack (PIP) of protected minerals, biotin and essential oils to improve the utilisation of grass protein. In addition, they include extra fibre sources and are fortified with higher levels of phosphorus, rumen buffers and yeasts. The key to success is to watch the forecast and start feeding the Supreme Breeder cubes before hitting a round of lush, leafy grass.

## Transitioning calves to grass

Many farms experience issues with calves showing symptoms of nutritional stress on grass. Farmers, vets and nutritionists are baffled how a healthy group of calves could be decimated within weeks of turnout with severe scour leading to dehydration and rapid weight loss. The term for this is 'Summer Scour Syndrome' but it can happen any time and we advise customers to transition weaned calves to grass slowly. Farmers that have adopted this practice have reported a noticeable improvement in thrive with less 'sick calves and unexplained scours.'

- Choose a nearby, sheltered paddock with access to clean water and ensure the paddock has not received an application of nitrogen in the previous month;
- Transition calves to grass slowly over a few weeks, preferably graze by day and offer access to indoors at night;
- Calves should be eating at least 1 kg/day, do not reduce concentrate feed levels for the first month after turnout, even if the weather is 'good' the dry matter of grass is low compared to the indoor diet;
- Feed calves at the same time every day and check for the onset of illness and
- Offer straw as a consistent source of roughage – the photo demonstrates our Ruminant Support Specialist David Lawrence's ingenious idea of using a recycled IBC tank to keep straw fresh and dry and it is easily transported between paddocks.
- Ultra Calf Cubes + Extra Health package which reduces the risk of acidosis at grass. It also includes an essential oil that provides a natural solution to boosting the animal's ability to cope with coccidial challenge. Bretts Extra Health package is growing in popularity for the grazing period when young stock is most prone to developing health issues after turnout.



## Bretts Grass Seed Range 2024

Our Grass Seed range has been developed by our ruminant nutrition team. We select DAFM approved varieties to improve intake, palatability, grass sward performance and give good clean outs. For further information, please request a brochure or visit [www.brettbrothers.ie](http://www.brettbrothers.ie)



New Grass Seed Brochure 2024



Ruminant Support Specialist David Lawrence.

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Callan, Co. Kilkenny  
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