



# R.M. JONES Newsletter

FARMCENTRES

[www.rmjones.com](http://www.rmjones.com)

October 2021

## Key reasons for feeding Opti-lix Energy this Topping time and beyond

- Late Summer/ Autumn grazing alone may not be able to provide all that is required, even when grass growth conditions have been favourable, for ewes to maintain and/or gain body condition on the approach to tugging.
- As grass quality starts to drop throughout the season, supplementation may be required to balance **energy, protein** and provide **essential minerals, vitamins** and **trace elements**, in particular **zinc, cobalt** and **selenium** especially important through the tugging and early pregnancy period.
- Grazed grass at this time of year will be low in sugar but high in rumen degradable protein. To ensure animals can make use of this protein a sugar source in the diet is essential (protein not able to be utilised will need to be processed and excreted at an energy cost to the ewe).
- The dry April followed by one of the wettest and coldest May's on record resulted in a slow start to the grazing season. As a consequence ewe body condition score may have suffered and ewes may be below target for this time of year as a result of having to draw on body reserves for milk production.
- A key factor involved in maximising lambing percentages and number of ewes holding to first service is body condition score at tugging time.
- Although very little growth of the lambs will occur during the mid-pregnancy period, the foetal membrane, including the placenta which is essential for providing oxygen and essential nutrients to the growing lambs, will develop at this time. If nutrition is compromised during mid-pregnancy, then placental size can be small and a reduced supply of nutrients and oxygen will be available to the unborn lambs, often resulting in the birth of weak, unviable lambs
- Offering supplementation to ewes during this key time can increase lambing percentage whilst supporting body condition score during tugging and early pregnancy will have positive effects on both lamb health and performance

### Should I Bolus my Cattle at Housing?

In Herefordshire, Monmouthshire and South Powys there are low levels of **Cobalt, Selenium, Iodine & Copper** – we have seen this from numerous soil & forage tests over the years.

Silage is never better than the day it was mowed. Once clamped or wrapped the vitamin and trace element levels start to degrade – and **Cobalt, Selenium, Iodine & Copper** all have really important functions in the **immune system** and **the metabolic systems** involved in **weight gain**.

Winter Feeding is expensive, if animals are suffering from these deficiencies they will not make the most of their feed.

**Downland Essential Cattle Plus Bolus** contains all Four of these trace elements & releases them into the rumen every day, for **180 days**.

For Cattle between **200kg & 400kg** the cost is **£4.97 per dose** which is **2.7 pence per day**. For Cattle above **400kg** the cost is **£6.31 per dose** which works out at **3.5 pence per day**

# Arable Update – October 2021

UK LIFFE Wheat May22 @ £200 - ??/t

MATIF OSR May22 @ £508 - ??/t

AN34.5% Fertiliser £450+

Current Wheat growth stage: GS12 - 21

Current OSR growth stage: GS15 - 20

## Overview

Oilseed rape crops are generally well established, flea beetle pressure appears to have been lower this year than in previous years. There is still the threat of larval damage to crops, check the base of any side shoots for larvae burrowing. Good crop nutrition will help overcome most damage seen. 30 - 40% of cereals have been drilled into good conditions. There have been delays due to lack of seed delivery on farm due to logistical issues eg processing plants running at 50% staffing, lorry driver availability etc. This will slowly work itself through but is frustrating. The big unknown (at the time of writing) is fertiliser – with the temporary closure of plants, delayed orders and the lack of transport there is a real risk that some farms will either be without fertiliser in the spring or see deliveries delayed well past the crucial timings in February and March.

## Tasks

**OSR** **Flea beetle larvae damage** may be seen later in the month. Keep checking, good nutrition with foliar nutrient eg **Nutriphite PGA** will help maintain plant vigour and growth

**Volunteer cereal control** may be required if it hasn't already occurred, where **Blackgrass** is an issue **Clethodim** based products will give the best control

**Phoma** and **Light Leaf Spot** will start raising their ugly lesions later in the month. We have access to the new industry leading fungicide "**Architect**" which will give improved control over anything else on the market.

**Cereals** Where crops are going in behind potatoes or maize check for compaction and repair where necessary. It's the little areas that rob the most yield.

We have a number of new herbicide options this year with improved activity against **Blackgrass** and **Bromes**. Some of these will come in "co-packs" which most of you will be used to by now. If you are not in a high grass weed situation then there are lower cost solutions out there to keep crops clean through the winter. Early weed control is the lowest cost way to keep crops clean and performing.

Aphid vectors for **BYDV** will be in crops. An Aphid spray will be required on most cereals to reduce the incidence of it occurring in the spring.

**Maize** Crops are ripening very quickly with quite a few off already. Yields look good on the later drilled crops, the wet May has reduced performance of the earlier drilled crops. Keep checking and harvest when cobs are fit – if you aren't sure please give us a call and we can check for you.

## Crop Events

We would like to form an **R.M. Jones** agronomy/crop group. If you are interested, please let your **R.M. Jones** contact know. The plan would be a series of on farm walks, technical presentations, variety plot visits, machinery ideas and whatever else people would be interested in. Our first event will be either at the end of this month or very early November.