



# R.M. JONES Newsletter

FARMCENTRES

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## A hot, dry summer: how to protect next year's lamb crop

Next year's scanning is decided now, not in the spring, and this hot, dry summer isn't doing us any favours. We've put together a free guide on the four things that make the difference before the tups go in: getting condition on your ewes, sorting the ram, filling the trace element gaps, and keeping ewes eating through the heat. Drop us an email at [ask@rmjones.com](mailto:ask@rmjones.com) and we'll get one sent over.

### Ewes need to be fit for tugging

Getting condition on your ewes before the tups go in is one of the best things you can do for next spring's lamb crop. Aim for a body condition score of 3 to 3.5 on lowland ewes, and around 2.5 on the hill. Ewes in the right nick ovulate better and hold better to the ram.

Normally a ewe needs **6 to 8 weeks of good grazing** (about 1.5kg of dry matter a day at 10 ME) to put on a condition score, which is roughly 10% of her bodyweight. But after the **dry spring and hot summer, there's been next to no grass**, and plenty of ewes are going to be behind going into tugging.

If your ewes are light, it's worth stepping in now rather than waiting for the grass to come back.

#### Why choose *Sheep Natural Energy*?

- ✓ **High energy (13.5 ME)** to help ewes gain condition
- ✓ **Quality protein** to support fertility
- ✓ **Balanced minerals & vitamins** including selenium, zinc, iodine, cobalt, to cover what the grazing is short of
- ✓ **Omega-3 from fish oil** for fertility and lamb vigour

Feeding *Sheep Natural Energy* buckets from tugging through to lambing helps:

- Hold ewe condition when grass is short
- Support fertility going into tugging
- Put back the trace elements often missing from pasture

It's not just for ewes, either. It also suits finishing lambs on forage or roots, giving them the extra energy and protein for growth. Feed one bucket to every 30 to 35 ewes.

## Buy 10 get 1 free on *Sheep Natural Energy* until the end of September

### Essential Lamb Bolus

Last year we upped the **Cobalt** in our **Essential Lamb Boluses** from **0.9mg** to **1.1mg** a day, a **22% lift**.

**Cobalt** matters because lambs need it to make **vitamin B12**, which is what turns feed into growth, keeps their appetite up and keeps them thriving. Weaned lambs are the ones most likely to fall short.

**Essential Lamb Boluses** gives a steady supply of trace elements for up to **4 months**, so it suits finishing lambs, replacement ewe lambs and store lambs over 25kg.

# Arable Update

**UK LIFFE Wheat Nov 26** £190- £200/t  
**MATIF OSR Nov 26** £450 - £460/t  
**AN34.5% Fertiliser** £480 - £550/t

**Current wheat GS** GS —  
**Current OSR GS** GS —

## Comments

Timing... its been hot, been dry and challenging. Patience and being ready to go will be crucial to a successful Autumn.

## OSR

The single most important driver of OSR success is establishment. Achieving an even and well established population going into the autumn is an absolute must. The biggest threat to that is Cabbage Stem Flea Beetle (CSFB). Pesticide solutions using insecticides are nowhere near as successful as they were meant to be. Cultural control methods are the most important way ahead. The list below is not a must do everything, but a useful guide to give more of successful establishment.

- **Consider rotation choices** and look at maintaining rape volunteers in last years fields or planting sacrificial headlands (eg turnip rape) to give space for your OSR to grow.
- **Rapid growing varieties are a must.** Strong Autumn vigour is crucial to get those plants to the 3 -4 leaf stage as soon as possible. Think Adapt, **Kanzzas** which have autumn vigour scores of 8+.
- **Avoid green on brown** to help camouflage the crop from CSFB by planting into or with fast establishing companion crops.
- **Moisture not calendar date.** Don't plant if establishment is compromised. Most hybrids will plant into mid-September. Use minimal disturbance as much as possible to conserve moisture.
- **Soil conditions and crop nutrition.** Along with moisture ensure that seed is treated with a bio-stimulant seed coating eg **Take Off** to speed establishment. Apply 30kg/ha seedbed Nitrogen (either with Phosphate or Release) or organic manures to keep the crop growing. Use a foliar stimulant at the 2 leaf stage (**Nutriphite PGA, Biimore, Lono Multi**) to improve rooting and speed of development.
- **Companion and nurse cropping** may help camouflage the crop and discourage CSFB, including reducing egg laying and larval numbers. Think Buckwheat, Berseem Clover etc that are not frost tolerant.
- **Monitor crops and use spray thresholds.** Keep checking for shot-holing and use yellow water traps to assess pressure. As a last resort use a foliar insecticide but these no longer give good control.

## Barley

Population is King with winter barley. Ensure seed rates are kept up, use the seed calculator below to calculate the correct seed rate for your drilling window (ideally 20<sup>th</sup> Sept – 10<sup>th</sup> Oct but obviously conditions dictate planting). Your target with conventional varieties (Caravelle, Tardis) is 300 – 320 plants established in the spring so keep seed rates up to accommodate that. Hybrids (**Kestrel, Inys**) are well worth a look and are generally planted at 200 seed/m<sup>2</sup> and will come in area based packs.

$$\text{Seed Rate Kg/Ha} = \frac{\text{Target plant x Thousand Grain population/m}^2}{\text{Weight (g) Expected establishment (\%)}}$$

Seed treatments with nutritional additions e.g. Manganese are really useful in improving establishment. Along with this consider using **RELEASE** with your Pre-Em herbicide to make your Phosphate available to speed root establishment.

## Wheat

We won't discuss wheat establishment this month as no one is going be drilling in September.... (we hope).

Varieties we like the look of include **Graham, Extase** (drill from 10<sup>th</sup> Oct), **Sparkler, Palladium, Challenger, Arnie, Hexton** and **Fitzroy**

**EARLY ordering of seed means it is more likely to be on farm when you want it.**

## Fertiliser

The prices at the top of the page reflect the current market. Please remember that the CBAM (Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism) will apply from January 2027 and may affect December ordered fertilisers. It applies to all fertiliser not just Nitrogen based product. The industry is still uncertain how much the tax will be, rates of £5/t to £100/t have been suggested based on different products.