



R.M.JONES Newsletter

FARMCENTRES

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Why You Should Feed Opti-Lix High Energy During Topping Season (and Beyond!)

As topping season approaches, it's crucial to ensure your ewes get the right nutrition to support their health and productivity. Here's why feeding **Opti-Lix High Energy** is a smart choice:

- **Grass Alone May Not Be Enough:** with this year's exceptionally dry spring and record-breaking summer temperature yet again, grass growth and quality have been well below average. Even with the recent growth we've had.
- **Declining Grass Quality:** As the season progresses, grass quality dips. Supplementing with **Opti-Lix High Energy** ensures your flock gets a balanced diet with essential energy, protein, and key minerals (especially zinc, cobalt, and selenium), all critical for a successful topping and early pregnancy period.
- **Support Efficient Protein Use:** Grass at this time is often high in rumen-degradable protein but low in sugars. To prevent the waste of this valuable protein, a sugar source is vital for proper digestion, saving energy for the ewe and ensuring optimal nutrition.
- **Boost Lambing Percentages:** A ewe's body condition at topping directly affects lambing success. Maintaining good condition helps increase the chances of ewes holding to their first service, boosting lambing percentages. This is especially important with the poor scanning results we had last year.
- **Support During Mid-Pregnancy:** While lambs don't grow much in mid-pregnancy, the foetal membranes, especially the placenta, develop significantly. Poor nutrition at this stage can lead to smaller placentas and weaker lambs at birth. Providing **Opti-Lix High Energy** can help avoid these issues by ensuring the right nutrients are available for healthy development.

Supplementing ewes during topping and early pregnancy with **Opti-Lix High Energy** can increase lambing percentages, support body condition, and improve overall lamb health and performance. It's a vital step to keep your flock thriving through the season!

Available in 20kg and 80kg

Should I Bolus my Cattle at Housing?

In Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, and South Powys, soil and forage tests consistently show low levels of **Cobalt**, **Selenium**, **Iodine**, and **Copper**—key nutrients for immune and metabolic systems.

After silage is mowed, trace elements quickly degrade, meaning your cattle may not get what they need to stay healthy and make the most of their winter feed.

The **Downland Essential Cattle Plus Bolus** provides these essential trace elements daily for 180 days, helping cattle thrive during housing. For cattle **200-400kg**, it costs just **4p** per day; for those over **400kg**, it's **4.9p** per day.

Don't let deficiencies impact your herd this winter!



Arable Update

UK LIFFE Wheat Nov 26 £200- £210/t
MATIF OSR Nov 26 £460 - £480/t
AN34.5% Fertiliser £480 - £550/t (Guide Only)

Current wheat GS GS —
Current OSR GS GS —14/16

Comments

The Autumn has, so far, been really positive with Oilseed Rape and winter cereal planting progressing quickly in good to excellent conditions. Some slug pressure and flea beetle pressure has been evident but crops have grown through these well. Grass growth has been fantastic with many farms planning to take a late cut of silage to make up for the forage used for summer buffer feeding.

Barley

Crops are establishing well with many already at the 2 – 3 leaf stage. If you haven't carried out any weed control now is the time. In min or zero tilled situations Brome can be an issue later in the year and also in the following spring. There are no post emergent Brome control herbicides available in Barley so ensuring you get a herbicide on now ideally containing Pendimethalin (**ORIENT**) will help. At the same time apply your BYDV/Aphid control – the Autumn is forecast to be milder than usual due to El Nino, there may be a requirement to make a further BYDV/Aphid control pass in October and November.

Wheat

As you may be aware Flufenacet based products may disappear next Autumn. We will be trying out a few new herbicides, including a product called **Fundatis**, this autumn that are based on alternative chemistry. Again, as per Barley, we will need to ensure there are multiple modes of action in any Autumn herbicides to reduce the growing hazard of weed resistance (both grass weed and broad leaved weed). As per last month remember the seed rate calculation below. Realistically you need be at 300 – 325 seeds/m in early October and increase by 25 seeds/m every week after. If conditions are tough then add a further 50 seeds/m to ensure a good population.

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

OSR

Keep an eye out for Flea Beetle, it is still around and backward and small crops can still be impacted badly. Crops will need broadleaved weed control if they haven't already been applied. We have **LaDiva** and **Belkar** which give very good control across of a range of difficult weeds. Apply Boron at the same time along with any other nutrition and volunteer control as required.

Forage Crops

Most forage and grass crops have established really well this Autumn. Remember that on forage brassicas you can apply up to 30kgN/ha. This will really benefit the crop and build grazing yield.

It is not too late to overseed some of the poorer paddocks you may have. Make sure you use high vigour Hybrid Ryegrasses, Italians and Festololiums as these will compete better against existing sward. These will need to be drilled rather than broadcast.

If cutting silage remember to use an additive for these late cuts, we now have access to NOVASILE from Rumenco which will help reduce moulds and overheating.

Technical corner

All the old boys used to do it, some of you do it now so why don't we all graze our winter crops (wheat, barley, oats, rye and OSR), especially as there are quite a few Sheep in our region.

Pros

1. Fills the hungry gap for stock and provides good nutrition. SAC work in 2024/2025 showed DLWG of over 300g/hd/day in 40kg lambs. Can you save on creep feed?
2. Forward crops can be tamed and evened up very quickly which can lead to PGR savings later.
3. Recycling of nutrients making P's K's more available.
4. Can help reduce disease pressure in crops by removing diseased leaves at the base of the crop.
5. Can help reduce the effect of larval flea beetle in OSR.

Cons

1. May reduce the effectiveness of autumn applied herbicides due to soil disturbance by sheep's feet.
2. If grazed too late in the season, past growth stage 30 (stem extension), crop damage will occur
3. Wet periods can be an issue as can leaving sheep grazing too long – short duration, high intensity required with a backup plan to remove sheep quickly if it gets wet
4. Fencing and containment – electric is your friend

Is it worth it? - Yes very much so... BUT.... make sure;

- The crop is forward enough to graze
- Soil conditions are right
- Graze hard, graze quickly
- Have a backup if it gets wet
- Remove stock before GS30



Cabbage Moth caterpillars giving forage rape a hiding... usually seen in colonies. Rapid control is essential.