

Feeding The Beef Cow For Bulling And Early Pregnancy

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Feeding For Fertility

- Feed to maximise suckler cow productivity by:
 - Increasing number of calves born
 - Reducing the calving period for block calving herds
 - Ensuring a calving interval below 365 days for all year calvers
 - Reducing culls for fertility



Energy for Breeding

- Energy is the most important requirement
- Influences time to start cycling
- Influences egg quality
- Get condition right before calving
- Avoid condition loss after calving



Body Condition for Breeding

- Spring calving cows should maintain body condition after calving.
- Autumn calvers should lose no more than half a condition score.
- Heifers in either group should lose no more than half a score.

	BCS at Calving	BCS at Breeding
Spring Calving	2.5 – 3.0	2.5
Autumn Calving	3.0	2.5
Heifers	3.0	2.5



How much energy is required?

- Early lactation energy need can double that of dry period.
- A 650kg cow needs about 120-130 MJ per day
- Huge variation with milk yield
- Beef cow will eat about 13 to 16 kg of dry matter
- Ration energy density of above 10MJ of ME per kg DM



Meeting Energy Needs At Pasture

- Good spring grazing can have an ME of 13MJ per Kg or higher
- Manage grazing to provide optimum sward heights
- Graze between 2800kg DM/Ha and 1500kg DM/Ha – mid welly to ankle bone!
- Cut, top or save seeded grass for hay or other cattle groups



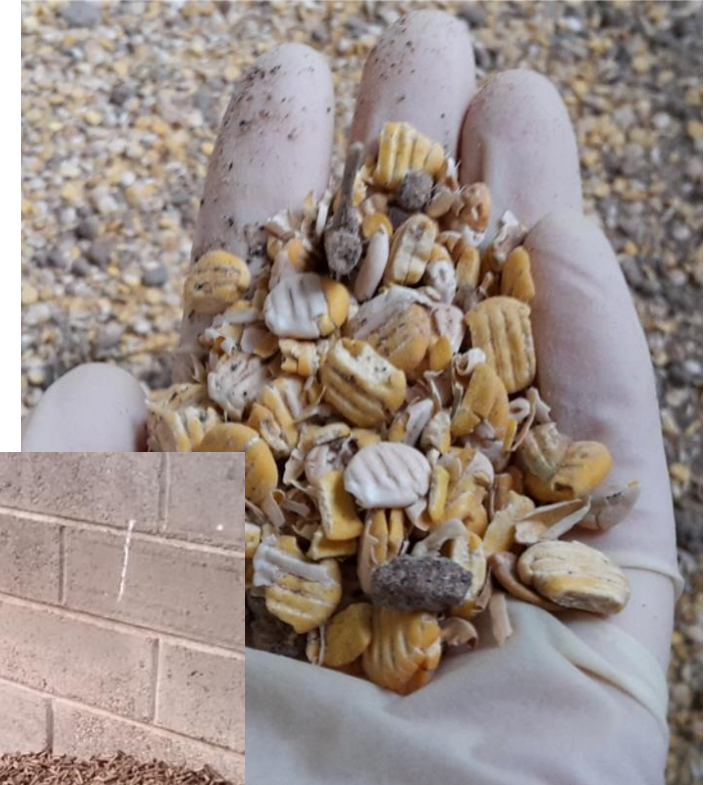
Meeting Energy Needs Indoors

- Assess forages
- Supplement low quality silages and hay
- Plan the ration with advice
- Dry cow rations are not high enough in energy
- Ensure palatability and access
- Free access to fresh water



Protein Requirements

- 10-12% Crude protein
- To supply nitrogen for rumen bugs - ERDP
- Maintains energy supply from rumen
- Supplement required for rations based on hay or straw



Macrominerals

- Magnesium is the most important macromineral to supplement
- Treat sole water supplies
- Provide buckets or licks
- Consider sacrificial hay bale or dry big bale silage on lush grass



Microminerals

- Required for fertility – particularly copper and selenium
- Extensive grazing animals at risk from mineral deficiency
- Provide correct supplementation with veterinary or nutritionist advice
- Boluses, powders, injections licks and blocks are options

Kendall, N.R., Holmes-Pavord, H.R., Bone, P.A., Ander, E.L. and Young, S.D., 2015. Liver copper concentrations in cull cattle in the UK: are cattle being copper loaded?. The Veterinary Record, 177(19), p.493.



Summary

- Get body condition right for calving
- Feed to maintain condition or lose no more than half a score
- Provide magnesium to prevent grass staggers
- Provide trace elements to meet requirements

