

April 2018

Issue 16



# Tarff Valley Ltd

Trading Together, Growing Together, Since 1903

## Newsletter

### Note to customers:

Stores & blending plants (apart from St Boswells & Dumfries) will be closed on **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> May for May Day Bank Holiday**

### RSABI's Southern Upland Way Fundraiser!

This RSABI fundraiser involves walking the Southern Upland Way, a 212 mile walk from Portpatrick to Cockburnspath to raise money for RSABI. The challenge starts on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> May and finishes on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June. If you would like to donate, pop into your local Tarff store.

### Dates for the Diary:

Ayr Show  
Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May

ScotSheep,  
Kings Arms Farm,  
Ballantrae  
Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> May



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## Preventing Staggers This Spring

Grass staggers, otherwise known as grass tetany or hypomagnesaemia, is a very real threat on farm for suckler and dairy cows at turnout, as well as for ewes post-lambing. However, it is easily managed by assessing and managing the on-farm risks, and farmers are urged this year to consider options early, as a result of the varied and extreme winter weather the UK has experienced.

Grass staggers is characterised by a deficiency of available dietary magnesium. Rapidly growing spring grass generally has a low magnesium content (0.1 to 0.2% in dry matter) which, combined with its low dry matter, leads to it passing through the rumen quickly, resulting in very low levels of magnesium absorption from grazing pastures alone at this time of year. In addition, increased potassium levels of spring grass, possibly due to fertiliser application, can upset the sodium to potassium ratio which, in turn, further decreases magnesium absorption by the animal.

To help alleviate the risk of grass staggers, we would always recommend feeding a long fibre source, such as hay or silage, to help slow the quick transition through the rumen that often occurs with spring grass. It is also essential to maintain dietary energy levels and dry matter intake and ensure a suitable sodium (salt) source is available to readdress the sodium to potassium ratio. Finally, it is also vital to ensure stock have access to a suitable magnesium supplement.

Magnesium isn't very palatable, so, by presenting it in a heavily molassed lick, farmers can be assured that their stock have a reliable supplement to complement their diet. **SUPAllyx Magnesium** is a molassed mineral lick containing 15% magnesium along with a range of minerals, vitamins and trace elements, including sodium. It is suitable for feeding to breeding and lactating cows and sheep post-lambing at risk of staggers and helps supplement grazing at this time of year. Alternatively, for cattle only, **Maxx Cattle Mag** is a dehydrated molasses bucket containing a high level of digestible sugar energy. Ideal for supplying extra energy at this crucial growing time, Maxx Cattle Mag also contains 10.5% magnesium and a full range of minerals, vitamins and trace elements including sodium.

For more information and prices of **SUPAllyx Magnesium** and **Maxx Cattle Mag**, please speak to your local Tarff Sales Representative.



## Innovative Seven Layer Silage Sheet Production In Scotland

Having provided exceptional crop protection for over four decades, the high performance VISQUEEN silage sheet range continues to evolve and advance.

The UK's only manufacturer of silage sheets, VISQUEEN led the market almost a decade ago with five-layer technology films, and after making a significant £4m investment in its manufacturing facility at Stevenston, Ayrshire, VISQUEEN has now commenced seven layer blown co-extrusion that maximises the performance characteristics of a silage sheet.

To the naked eye one silage sheet can appear similar to the next. However, viewing the latest VISQUEEN silage sheets at a microscopic level reveals how seven individual layers are brought together to form one uniquely strong yet versatile and lightweight film structure.

With seven layers to choose from, additives and other raw materials can be inserted with greater precision during manufacturing to create dedicated film layers for UV protection, puncture resistance, tear resistance and strength. Such technically advanced manufacturing processes ensure that livestock farmers can now avail themselves of a more reliable, stable and high performing silage sheet.

Being lighter, VISQUEEN silage sheets are easier to handle and apply to silage clamps of all sizes. The advanced manufacturing techniques employed enable smoother gauge control to deliver a consistent film thickness across the whole sheet. This, in turn, provides an enhanced oxygen barrier and a more consistent level of protection across the clamp surface.

The durable VISQUEEN silage sheet range is strong enough to withstand the rigours of the tough working farm environment where its robust features help to prevent tears and splits occurring during the clamp sheeting process.

Please speak to your local Tarff sales representative or store to source the correct size of Visqueen silage sheet for your needs.

# VISQUEEN POLYCROP

On Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March, we sponsored the St Boswells Easter Sale. Congratulations to S & J Allen, Longnewton who were awarded Champion with their Limousin Heifer, which is fed on a Tarff custom Beef Blend containing Diamond V XPLS. Well done!



David MacDonell presented the prize to the Allens along with judges, Louise & Anna Forsyth from WTS Forsyth & Sons, Butchers, Peebles.

### IMPORTANT INFO

Privacy laws are changing. From Friday 25<sup>th</sup> May, the new EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) requires all customers to 'Opt In' to receiving marketing materials. Throughout April, we will be contacting customers to get consent for us to send you the latest updates on products & services through a number of different marketing platforms (newsletter, email etc).

### TARFFIE TIME!

In the bitterly cold weather, a Tarff hat will keep you cosy!



## Helpful hints to protect lambs and calves against coccidiosis

As coccidiosis is a serious disease that can result in significant economic losses, managing coccidiosis is imperative to ensure healthy young stock.

Managing coccidiosis, and reducing the impact of coccidial infections, depends on allowing a low level of exposure, so that young stock can develop immunity, but preventing levels of infection that will cause decreased growth rates or clinical disease.

Follow the guidance below on how to protect lambs and calves against this parasite:

**1) Treat all animals in a group:** if there is no history on which to base a strategic treatment plan, all animals in the group should be treated following a positive diagnosis of pathogenic Eimeria species on routine dung samples, or immediately after clinical signs of coccidiosis are seen.

**2) Take farm history:** it is important to get a diagnosis of the species of Eimeria to check if it is a harmful species along with considering the individual farm history. Timing of treatment should be based on the timing of suspected exposure and knowledge of previous outbreaks on the farm.

## Improving Utilisation of Nutrients through Precision Agriculture

SoilQuest is the leading UK provider of precision soil sampling and mapping. The company specialises in soil management and nutrition advice tailored to the farm's individual field requirements.

With over 15 years' experience, the unique system is well proven and differentiates itself from other GPS sampling systems. By mapping the soil characteristics with an electro-conductivity scanner, a soil map is produced showing the variations in the field. Management zones are created according to the differing soil conductivity from which samples are assessed and recommendations made to optimise fertiliser application.

The first thing to look at should be pH. Many vital soil and nutrient interactions rely on having a pH of between 6.3 and 7. A soil with a pH of 6 for example, will lead to a lock up of Phosphate, which results in only 50% being utilised. Nitrogen utilisation also decreases significantly as the pH declines below pH5.5. There can often be fields with a pH ranging from 5.5 to 7, which justifies the investment for pH and nutrient mapping.

Soil management and nutrition play a crucial role in crop and livestock production. Tarff is delighted to be working alongside SoilQuest to ensure that farmers are getting the best use out of their lime, manure and fertiliser for maximum productivity from their farms.

For more information about SoilQuest, please speak to your Tarff representative.



**3) Treat in time:** strategic treatment is often required and is necessary to prevent losses associated with subclinical infections. Ideally treatment should be given after infection but before the parasite starts damaging intestinal cells and causing clinical signs. This helps to prevent the build-up of environmental contamination, reducing the risk of any animals in the group picking up a heavy infection and suffering from clinical disease.

**4) Ensure good hygiene:** water troughs should be cleaned and emptied regularly to help prevent contamination with faeces, and bedding should be kept clean and dry. Good ventilation will also help reduce infection pressure by reducing the build-up of warmth and moisture which favour oocyst survival.

**5) Keep animals in similar age-groups:** Older animals can act as a source of infective oocysts for younger animals. In addition, providing optimum grouping of young stock will help avoid environmental stressors which can increase risk of disease.

**6) Ensure adequate colostrum intake:** Colostrum taken in shortly after birth allows calves and lambs to absorb whole antibodies, which gives them some protection in the first weeks of life. As these colostrum antibodies decline, calves and lambs become vulnerable to infection.



Please speak to your local store regarding products which can help prevent or treat coccidiosis.

## Grass Land Weed Control

Spring is here, and it is great to see that grass is growing at last. However, if grass is growing so are the weeds. Early control of some weeds is necessary to keep swards clean. It is essential to spray weeds at the correct growth stage to ensure a good kill. April is a good month to try and control weeds such as Buttercup, Chickweed and perhaps Ragwort. May is a better month to control Rushes, Docks, Thistles, Nettles, Gorse and Broom. Although the weather in recent years has made correct timings very difficult, at Tarff, we offer a comprehensive range of quality herbicides to eliminate all these costly weeds. To enhance the efficacy of the chemicals we would recommend the addition of Companion Gold adjuvant in most cases, and increasing water volumes to at least 300lt/ha.

Please contact Stair, Rory or Colin for further details.

## Dairy farmers: Heed the importance of fibre in grazing dairy diets!

Remember the importance of feeding a digestible fibre source to lactating cows in an attempt to curtail the inevitable drop in butter fat levels on grass-based diets. The market for fibre products is very tight as we head towards spring turnout and looks likely to remain so throughout the grazing period. Don't overlook the importance of a properly balanced diet and try to plan ahead to ensure a supply of suitable feeds.

Please speak to your local Sales Representative who will be able to provide you with more information.