



UM FARM NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2017

Welcome to the September 2017 edition of the UM farm newsletter, in this issue Victoria Phillips looks at how molasses can help you take advantage of the better milk prices currently on offer even when forage quality is down.

Make hay while the sun shines with a little help from Molasses

By Victoria Phillips BSc Agriculture nutrition and MSc Animal production

After months of sustained high dairy commodity prices, farmgate milk prices are finally starting to reflect the record-breaking values of butter and cream. Processors had initially been slow to return sky-rocketing prices for fats, but many have now upped the price they pay for milk, with the UK average now edging towards the 30p/litre mark for September 2017. Whilst this is good news, practices on farm to improve efficiency shouldn't be forgotten, and can further increase profitability as milk prices continue to rise.

Using homegrown forages effectively is the most economical way of feeding on farm. While this season's forage yields have been good the quality has been variable. Protein levels are higher this year compared to where they were last year (up from 22.9% from 19.6%), but both Dry Matter Intake (DMI) and Metabolisable Energy (ME) levels are lower than the same period in 2016. Cane molasses products such as **Caneflow** will provide energy in the form of sugars to balance the lower levels seen in this season's grass, and also improve dry matter intakes in many ways.

Recent data from ADHB¹ shows that although grass growth rates are up, the dry matter of the forages are lower than last year, which means less dry matter per mouthful. By balancing the degradable protein in grass and grass silage, and making the forage more palatable, the addition of molasses will encourage animals to eat more and produce more milk. On average an increase of 1kg DMI into the cow gives an additional 2 litres of milk.

Continued overleaf...



Molasses Market in brief

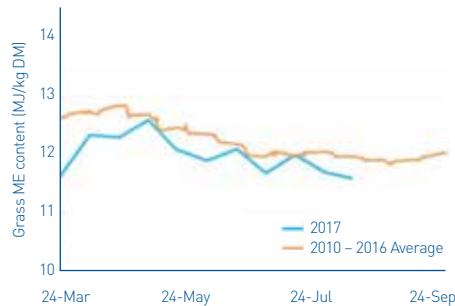
- Recent softening in both £ and \$ terms of Cane molasses due to industrial users switching to Raw sugar/Beet molasses
- Cane molasses crops for 2018 looking at similar levels to last year
- Surplus volume for export continues to fall leaving market at risk of some volatility going forward
- Fx rates continue to be a major factor in pricing, does the strength lie with the \$ or £?



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As well as low Dry matter, the ME content of forages are also lower this year (see Graph 1), resulting in forages that are proportionally higher in protein but lower in sugars. By adding **Caneflow** molasses to a typical dairy diet, you can replace the lower sugars very effectively.



Graph 1

In the Bioparametrics ration programme*, diets based on typical dairy rations with silage qualities of 11.2MJ ME/kgDM and 8.2 MJ/kg DM were compared (table 1). Identical rations with the silages showed a reduction in margin of £0.58 per head per day due to a reduction in yield of 2 litres per day, costing £174.00 per day in a 300 cow herd.

Typical Dairy ration	Grass silage 11.2MJ ME /kg DM	Grass silage 8.2MJ ME /kg DM	Grass silage 8.2MJ + extra 1kg molasses
Silage	56	56	56
Hipro soya	3.1	3.1	3.1
Distillers	0.8	0.8	0.8
Molasses	1.1	1.1	2.1
Minerals	0.1	0.1	0.1
Milk yield	38 litres	36 litres	38 litres
Margin over Feed £/hd/day	£7.35	£6.79	£7.18

Table 1

This significant reduction in the sugar content of the silage can be regained by adding extra **Caneflow** molasses to the diet. Increasing the molasses content of the ration by 1kg per day brings the average milk yield back up to 38 litres/day, and increases profit by £0.39 per day, or £117.00 per herd. Whilst not quite as high a return as the margin from high-energy silage, it is an effective substitute to make up the quality deficit of the poorer forage and help ensure farms can still maximise their milk production and take advantage of the current financial returns on offer.

* Bioparametrics, Peter Wilson Building, West Mains Road, Edinburgh EH9 3JG

¹ Agricultural & Horticulture Development Board, <https://ahdb.org.uk/>



UK Dairy Day at Telford International Centre

United Molasses GB will be at this year's event (stand H1-36) on **Wednesday 13th September 2017** at the Telford International Centre, so please come and say hello, and find out more about our extensive list of products including our exciting new **ProX** additive.

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