



Presentation at BVA Congress

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Potential changes in feed and forage availability and implications.

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Contents

- What price increases mean economically on farm
- Some strategy considerations
- The role of vets in decision making

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Feed availability

- Some US maize gluten and soya strains banned in EU
- Feed available- but at a price!

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Global economic climate

- Supply vs demand plus speculation
- Wheat- increased to £190 (2X)
- Soya- increased to £300 (2X)
- Fertilizers (3X)

But, milk price has increased significantly too and there are no quota charges so marginal litres look attractive

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Local vs Global

- Feeds will normally follow world prices
- Local geography can be important-
 - Fuel costs-
brewers/carrots/apple pomace moving less DM compared with wheat



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Local vs Global

- ‘Distress sales’
 - £20-30/tonne to dry wheat and storage needed
 - Caustic wheat
 - Urea treated wheat
 - ‘Alkalage’



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Some simple economics

- 8000 litre herds
- 0.35-0.4kg purchased feeds per litre of milk produced
- Concentrates now £210 per tonne compared with £140
- **Extra** purchased feed costs $2.8t \times (210-140) = £196$ per cow or 2.5ppl.
- Comparison with **total** vet bill

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Group	Yield (L)	DIM	Intakes (kg)	FCE	Income (£)	Costs (£)	Margin (p/L)	Margin/Cow (£)
Fresh	38	15	21.5	1.76	10.26	1.94	21.9	8.32
Highs	50	66	24.5	2.04	13.50	2.20	22.6	11.30
Mids	34	215	22.2	1.53	9.18	1.99	21.1	7.19
Lows	26	273	19.7	1.32	7.02	1.77	20.2	5.25

Feed less concentrate?

E B V C | 'A good agronomist is more valuable than a good vet'. Discuss!

- Forage DMI should always be maximised
 - Rumen function and acidosis
 - Forage NDF as % of DMI >21%
- How much is in the pit in m³?
X 0.65 to get tonnes of fresh matter
- Work out requirements
- Keep doing it and act early if running out



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Increasing forage stocks

- Land is in demand, rents have increased
- Maize under plastic
- W Wales
 - Tonnage per acre increased from 13 to 17
 - Starch % increase



Brewers grains, Trafford Gold can be ensiled

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Forages- what can go wrong?

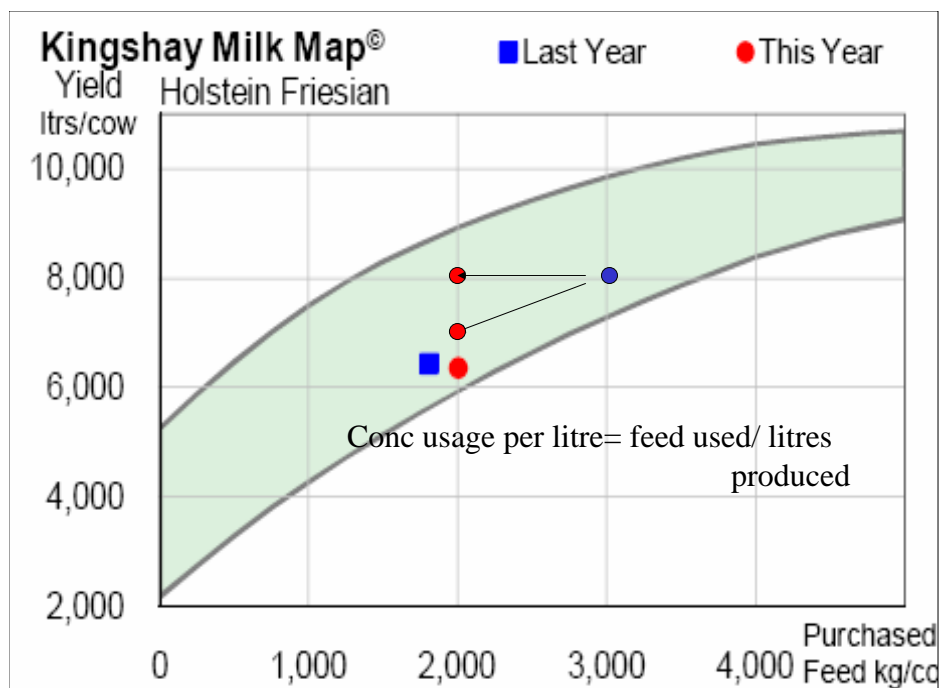
- Grass silage
- Maize silage- less fuel costs, becoming comparatively cheaper.
- Chop length
- Additives?



Diagnostic equipment- hand, thermometer, egg

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Management



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Post routine visit calculation

- Concentrate feed rate
 - Milk in tank plus discarded
 - Cow numbers
 - BF to get 4% FCM (0.2% = 1 litre)
 - Concentrates and straights corrected to 87% DM

 - 3100 litres @ 4.2% BF
 - 146 cows, 21.2 litres but 22.2 with 4% FCM
 - 3.5 kg concs, 5 Brewers grains $(5 \times 25 / 87) = 1.43$ kg
 - Total concentrates = 4.9kg
 - 0.22kg/litre

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Decreasing concentrate costs

- Forages
- Management to minimise waste
- **Grouping strategies**

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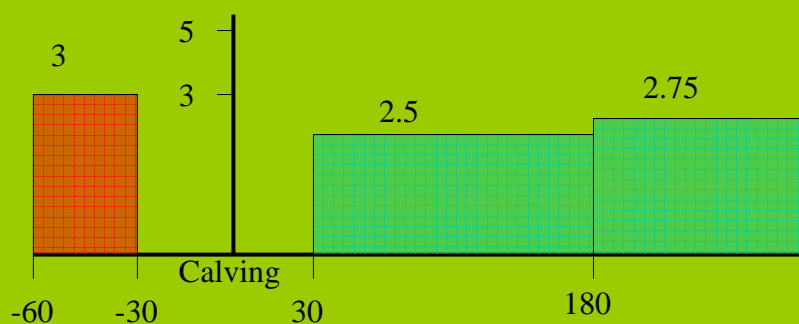
Grouping strategies

- Depends on labour as more groups require more effort.
- Single grouping can increase numbers of fat cows
- 'Low' group can be self fulfilling prophecy
- Out of parlour feeders
- Feeding in parlour



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BCS 'faults'



Wiltbank et al 2007

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Decreasing concentrate costs

- Forages
- Management to minimise waste
- Grouping strategies
- **Avoid *some* expensive feeds**

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Avoid *some* expensive feeds

- Know the milk contract
- Palm oil derived supplements- £840/tonne
 - Look at contract, extra litres or extra quality?
 - E.g. Linseed vs C16s
 - Linseed: 35p to get 55p worth of extra litres, loss in BF probably than this.
 - C16s: 42p to get extra BF, needs to be worth 1.5p extra per litre if no yield increase

Summary

- Forage quality
- Grouping
- Avoiding waste

- Ways to make yourselves more useful than an agronomist!
- Fertility to maintain responsive cows
- Understand costings and feed rates