

Kite

update

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Brexit report overview

This month we have published the enclosed report outlining the effects that four different Brexit scenarios would have on the UK dairy industry. Rather than just looking at a hard or soft Brexit route, we have also modelled each possibility in conjunction with both a weak or strong currency, as we have identified that the strength of the pound is a factor that will have one of the biggest impacts at farm level.

While the reality might end up being somewhere in between the extreme

scenarios we have looked at, the report shows the only real option that promises to give dairy farmers the level of profit necessary for a sustainable business is a 'hard Brexit with a weak currency' scenario. We will continue to talk to DEFRA, NFU and other key organisations about how to maintain a sustainable, efficient dairy industry and will be pleased to discuss with you the potential impact that different types of Brexit could have on your individual business.



No more PPI calls!

Those pesky PPI calls should become a thing of the past when the EU's new data protection rules come into force on May 25th this year.

The General Data Protection Regulations, or GDPR, will make you the controller of your own personal data – how refreshing! Companies handling personal data will have to inform you of what data they hold, how they will use

it, if they pass it to any other companies and how long they will keep your data for.

The new regulations will apply to all businesses no matter how big or small. This means we as a business and also your farming business will have to comply. Here at Kite, we take your privacy seriously and it is extremely important to us that we have your trust

to handle your personal data. We are taking steps to make sure we meet these new requirements so we will be in touch with further information on this shortly.

Haven't heard about GDPR until now? Then take a look at the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) website at ico.org.uk for more information and to find out what it means for you and your business.

Multi-cut update



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Last year many more farmers adopted the “multi-cut” approach to silaging. Having had a lot of silages analysed and seen how these forages have fed over this winter, we thought now would be a good time to review the system and build on the lessons learnt. The grass growth curve for 2017 was unusual and the weather did make it a challenging year for forage production, especially in the West and parts of Scotland and Wales, but there were some real success stories from across the UK.

As a reminder, the main reasons for adopting the system are:

- Reducing risk - more forage in diets reduces exposure to volatility in the feed markets, lighter cuts need shorter weather windows to make and

high quality, dry forage is much safer for the rumen

- Increased Dry Matter yields – keeping stubbles green means grass keeps growing
- Higher quality forage can be fed at higher rates so increasing nutrients from home-grown sources

Results from last year

The results from last year showed up some very marked trends which are highlighted below. The main messages to take from these are that dry matters need to be targeted at 35% or above and the very early silages taken in April have proved to be a problem as it was difficult to get them dry enough and the fermentations were variable.

Table 1: Results of analyses ranked on dry matter

DM%	D Value	ME	CP	Ammonia	pH	Total Acids	Lactic Acid
< 30%	72.6	11.6	19.4	9.4	3.9	116	87.7
30-35%	73.8	11.8	18.3	5.3	4.0	77	68.7
35-40%	73.4	11.7	18.5	6.2	4.4	70	56.7
> 40%	74.0	11.8	17.2	3.6	4.8	41	36.6

Table 2: Results of analyses ranked by cutting date (results from cuts after 10th May were mainly from higher altitude sites)

Cut Date	DM%	D Value	ME	CP	Ammonia	pH	Total Acids	Lactic Acid
Before 26th April	30.3	71.4	11.4	18.9	9.5	4.4	92.3	60.6
27th April - 3rd May	39.1	73.8	11.8	18.5	5.9	4.5	66.2	53
4th - 10th May	39.8	73.5	11.7	17.7	4.4	4.3	59.3	49.6
After 10th May	36.0	74.5	11.9	18.0	4.9	4.3	66.9	55.2

Best Practice for 2018

- Use the correct amount of slurry and fertiliser (have slurry analysed and keep up to date with soil tests)
- Use sulphur in the fertiliser to improve N uptake and true protein levels in the silage
- Aim to cut in the first weather window in May, targeting subsequent cuts at 35 day intervals, but being prepared to go from day 30 if the weather is onside
- Leave a stubble height of 5-7cm to encourage rapid regrowth and reduce drought stress
- Get dry matters to 35% or above where possible
- In most situations ted grass right behind the mower to maximise evaporation rates whilst the plant stomata are still open
- Use the tedder based on weather, some situations will require more than one pass, others will not need any
- Chop length should be varied according to dry matter- at 35% or above, chop length can be reduced to 25mm (the wetter the grass, the longer the chop length needs to be)
- Layer grass in the pit as opposed to using a traditional wedge
- If applying slurry after cutting, this needs to be done immediately to minimise leaf contamination
- Aim for a ration with a 60:40 forage:concentrate ratio and target 15kg forage DM/cow
- To avoid clamp slippage watch N and K levels, excesses will cause problems with fermentation continuing whilst the crop is stored

Labour survey

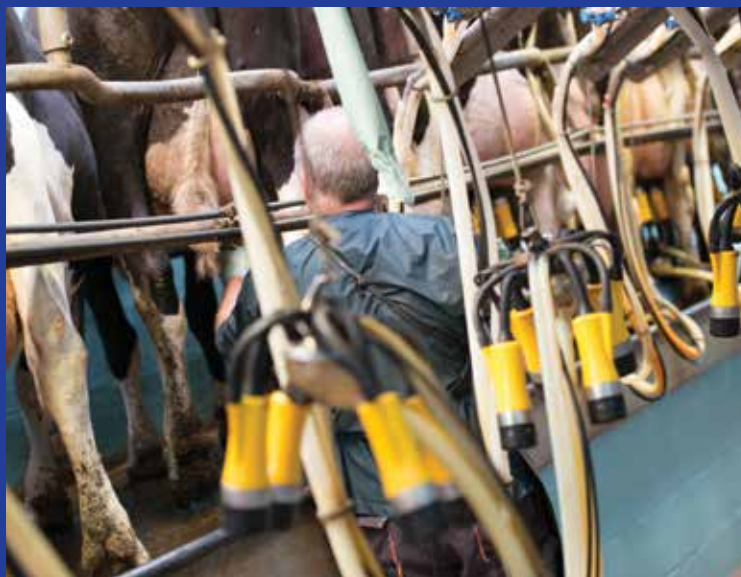
The results of a Kite/RABDF labour survey which highlights the dairy industry's reliance on non-UK labour has recently been submitted as an inquiry to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee.

The survey, which covered 1,000 dairy farms across the country, found that nearly 30% of employed labour was from overseas. With Brexit and the inevitable uncertainty around it making the recruitment and retention of foreign staff increasingly difficult, the inquiry urges the government to look at the provision for non-UK farm workers to enter the country.

Whilst reliance on non-UK labour varies across the UK, with the highest area being the South East, the lack of foreign labour is already having a big impact on some dairy businesses.

"We are seeing major business decisions being taken, such as the holding back on expansion plans, as a result of labour shortages. This is an issue that needs to be addressed fast," said Kite's John Allen, speaking at DairyTech earlier this month.

"We also need to take action on the lack of high quality candidates from the UK entering farming.



A YouGov survey in June 2017 showed that only 4% of the UK population would consider a job on a dairy farm," he added. "It's not just about high wages - good communication and people skills go a long way in recruiting and retaining staff. People management is a skill that can be learnt and we are seeing increasing numbers of clients developing this side of their business."

"Apprentice schemes, run by local colleges are a good way of recruiting young staff," said John. "Many farmers are finding them a valuable

asset to their businesses and are reflecting that value by paying them the minimum wage rather than the £3.60/hr required of an apprentice."

"As well as attracting young people to work on dairy farms, technology also has a role to play in mitigating labour shortages. The use of systems such as heat detection or rumen monitoring all reduce the need for labour and labour constraints have been a key factor in the installation of some robotic units. New technology represents a huge opportunity for the industry over the next five to ten years," John concluded.

Highlights from this year's Florida Nutrition Symposium



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There were some excellent papers at this conference - some of these were controversial, others reinforced what we already know – here is a small summary of one section.

Protected choline - Dry cow and transition diets have a massive impact on cow health and subsequent milk yield and fertility. Conference papers highlighted how rumen-protected choline has a strong role to play aiding energy metabolism, helps the liver cope with mobilised fat and helps the cow's immune system. New research was presented showing that when cows are fed rumen-protected choline (Reashure) in early lactation, it has a long lasting effect, improving milk yields by 1-2 litres/day well into late lactation. Research was also presented showing that calves born from cows

fed rumen protected choline had higher levels of IgGs and these calves had better growth rates, health and feed conversion rates.

The "Goldilocks diet" - This is where cows are fed an ad lib, low energy density diet throughout the dry period. Rations are based on a mix of forages to provide just enough energy to meet the cow's requirements supplemented to give a protein level of around 14.5% in the mix. Cows calve with lower rates of mobilised fat, less fatty liver, lower levels of BHBs and fewer displacements. This has been suggested as a strategy for reducing BHBs after calving. However, there was criticism of the Goldilocks approach at the conference because, on average, across 10 trials it was found to reduce milk yield and milk fat.

Beta-hydroxyl butyrate (BHB) – There was some criticism of on-farm blood sampling kits which are being used around the world to measure BHB levels in the first two weeks after calving, as they are picking up high BHB levels when the cows are milking well, causing people to panic. The view from the conference was that **if you are seeing high BHB levels, and the cow is milking well and not showing any other problems then do not worry about it**, as cows have been bred to increase milk yields and one way they do this is to naturally mobilise body fat reserves. If you are worried about the cow's energy status then a better indicator would be to blood test for non-esterified fatty acids, but this cannot be measured on farm.

Effective People Management course



The ability to manage people can make or break a business and farming is no exception. Motivated staff allow a business to achieve its objectives, not only providing job satisfaction to the individuals involved, but together creating a team that ultimately contributes to better financial performance.

Here at Kite we are running a series of courses on staff and people management across the country, facilitated by consultants Sophie Helyer and Jo Speed, who together have a wealth of knowledge in facilitation, coaching and people management.

Delegates will undertake a series of interactive discussions and exercises designed to build their understanding of themselves and individuals within their team; enabling them to analyse their strengths and development areas and how to communicate more effectively.

The course will help participants to:

- Identify their strengths, personality and management style, and understand how this affects the team they work with (including other family members, employees and stake holders)
- Understand motivation - quick wins to meet team expectations
- Use effective listening and questioning skills to facilitate good conversations

- Delegate effectively
- Communicate goals and objectives
- Manage change
- Develop their team

Delegates will leave the course having had an opportunity to practice all these skills, a clearer view of their role and responsibilities as managers and with their own personal action plan to build on. They will also have a "take home toolkit" to refer to when back on the farm.

To register your interest and learn when the first course is taking place in your area please contact Emma Bradshaw at the Kite office on 01902 851007 or email Emma. Bradshaw@kiteconsulting.com



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