

Covid-19 Update - Youngstock Turnout Guidelines

Information correct as at 12:30pm on 03.04.2020

- Youngstock can do well at grass, but good management is needed to hit target growth rates
- Supply adequate supplements and make sure minerals are available
- Discuss worming strategy with your vet

The current situation may mean different approaches to normal routines have to be adopted. On some units turning some (or more) youngstock out may be a way of reducing the daily workload whilst saving on feed and bedding costs. We still need to remember that this is the future of the herd and, therefore, it is crucial that growth rates and health are maintained.

Grazing heifers UNDER 12 months

- It is more difficult to achieve maximum growth rates, health control and overall management.
- Grazing under 3 months is not recommended
- Calves over 4 months can graze successfully IF concentrates (1-3 kg/head/day depending on grazing conditions are fed) or minerals are supplemented.
- Try to weigh a proportion (10%) of heifers on a regular basis to check growth rates and adapt management accordingly.

Target Weights	Holstein	Jersey
Target weight at 4 months	125-150 kg	100 kg
Target weight at 11 months	320-350 kg	225 kg

- Grazing heifers (12 months+) will eat 35-50 kg grass (fresh) each day
- Ensure grazing platform is suitable for group size.
- In the run up to service heifers should be on a rising plane of nutrition to maximise viable embryos.

Target Growth Rates	Holstein	Jersey
Target weight at service (from 13 months)	365-415 kg	260 kg
Wither height at 13 months	124-130 cm	114 cm
Target weight at 15 months	420-485 kg	290 kg

- Also consider supplementary feeding for older heifers to suit grazing availability. Ensure mineral is included or review options for ad-lib offering waterproofed/spiced mineral licks.

Target Growth Rates	Holstein	Jersey
Target weight at 22 months	530-595 kg	390 kg

Worming Strategies for Youngstock

Turnout for youngstock is a risk period for parasite infections. A specific plan for your farm should be worked out with your vet and they can direct you to which products to use, but here are some points to consider.

The current advice from COWS (control of worms sustainably) is:

- Before turnout, do faecal egg counts for rumen and liver fluke.

- If required, treat with a product that targets adult fluke to reduce pasture contamination.
- Where possible turn out 1st season grazing animals onto clean or low risk pasture
- If the pasture was used by cattle last year a strategic worming protocol is needed for this year's calves to prevent Parasitic Gastroenteritis (PGE)
- Lungworm is a big risk to 1st season grazing animals in certain areas, vaccinating youngstock before turnout is important. For older stock a risk assessment should be carried out and they may require boosters.

PGE:

- Young calves or animals that have not grazed before, will have no immunity to the common parasites present during grazing. The main parasitic diseases to watch for are Parasitic Gastroenteritis (PGE) and Lungworm.
- PGE is a disease in the abomasum, and unlike lungworm and liver fluke, is not commonly seen in adult cattle.
- Prevention of PGE is important and there are two options which should be discussed with your vet as they depend on your individual farm history.

Strategic anthelmintic treatments

Using treatments within 3 weeks of turnout and repeating them as required up to mid-July, to try to reduce the pasture contamination. Take care with this method as it can promote anthelmintic resistance on farm.

Therapeutic treatments

This option tries to reduce anthelmintic resistance and only uses products when needed as treatments. Use in conjunction with pasture rotation to avoid animals being exposed to large parasite burdens later in the season. This needs detailed planning and there is greater risk of seeing subclinical or clinical disease.

Lungworm:

- Lungworm can cause serious issues in first season grazing animals, but it can affect second season grazing and adult cattle. The immunity to lungworm is quite poor and needs repeated exposure to be maintained. We have seen an increase in cases in adult cattle, so it is important to consider your risk factors, speak to your vet to discuss the management specific to your area.
- Vaccination is a key strategy for lung worm control. Vaccine should be given to animals over 8 weeks old, as two doses, 4 weeks apart, with the second dose being completed 2 weeks before turnout to ensure the immunity is present. The animals then need to be presented with a "lungworm challenge" to complete the immune response.

For further discussion or to help with any questions that you may have, please contact Consultant Support on consultantsupport@kiteconsulting.com or 01902 851007 / 07542 403225