

## News Release

October 2021

### Calibrate your feeding equipment to keep costs in check – Ben Watts



With the cost of straights and concentrates at current highs, it is even more important to be accurate with your dairy herd feeding. It goes without saying, 'to manage you need to measure' so think about when you last checked the calibrations of your in-parlour feeding system, robots, out-of-parlour feeders or feeder wagon itself says Ben Watts, Head of Technical & Innovation at Kite Consulting.

"These calibration systems are designed to be accurate, but they can, and do, drift out of kilter over time. With parlour and out-of-parlour feeders especially, the pressure the cows can give them to get that last tasty morsel can affect their calibration" he says.

"Ideally, systems dispensing concentrates should be checked and recalibrated with each new load of feed. It does not take long, and all you really need is a bag or bucket and some accurate (ideally digital) kitchen scales.

"There are safety considerations when calibrating/checking the TMR feeder wagons, so care is needed. Ask your dealer or agent for help and advice in this respect. Simply keeping the weigh cells clear of mud and muck is a good regular service tip," he adds.

How much could inaccuracy be costing? "For a 250-cow herd, with an average 4kgs fed in the parlour or out-of-parlour feeders, you would be feeding 1 tonne per day," says Ben. "A 10% drift could be 400g per cow or 100kgs per day. This equates to 3 tonne per month, and with current concentrate prices heading north of £250/tonne this could be as much £750/month or £9,000 per annum! If you are feeding organic concentrates at say £450/t – this equates to £1,350 per month or £16,200 per annum. Now is the time to get the scales out!" Ben concludes.



Ben Watts – Kite Consulting

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