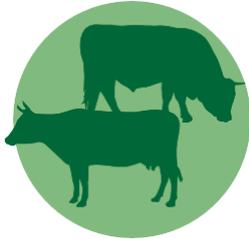




Dairy Cows

Increased Milk Yields from Forage

Lewis Graham



Lewis Graham,
Feed Adviser,
ForFarmers

Key outcomes of feed advice

- Milk yields up 1000litres
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Better forage utilisation

Background and area of expertise

Lewis Graham is from a family farming background. He has a HND and Honours Degree in Agriculture from the Royal Agricultural University. Lewis has worked on many large dairy farms in southern England, and has spent time working on dairy farms in New Zealand. He has been working for ForFarmers since 2015 with progressive dairy farmers on a daily basis. Lewis gives on-farm advice on a varied range of subjects such as dry cow management, heifer rearing, animal health, rationing dairy cows and forage production. He also covers some beef and sheep farms.

Give an example of how your feed advice has made a measurable difference

On a 120 dairy cow herd, Lewis was able to advise on changes to bring about significant improvement to herd performance and forage management. In order to improve milk yields, a full ration review was undertaken and advice was given to improve rumen efficiency and dry matter intakes.

This allowed the cow to utilise more of the home-grown

produce, which led to an increase to milk yields. Field walks and grass sampling before harvest helped to ensure forage quality was at its optimum before cutting.

A focus on close-up dry cow management and fresh calved cows helped to get cows ready to milk and give the best start possible. Improving dry matter intake meant that fresh cows could eat more forage and produce more milk. Milk yields have increased from 8000 litres to 9000 litres, harvesting and forage utilisation has increased. Better yields have helped to improve sustainability, while better cow management has improved overall welfare.

What difference does FAR make to you and to your customers?

Lewis believes in ongoing training as part of assisting in the advice he gives to farmers. FAR facilitates such development with a clear structure and recognised status.

He believes that registered members of FAR should work to raise the scheme's profile amongst the livestock sector. This in turn will provide farmers with confidence in members' level of knowledge, and a greater understanding of the key issues facing the livestock industry.