

When peak performance matters what do you feed?

Much has been written and talked about when it comes to the benefits of supplementary feed for ruminant animals. Using quality animal feed to supplement grass fed herds enhances overall performance and well-being but it also plays a valuable role pre calving and in early lactation.

Board member of the NZ Feed Manufacturers Association and Managing Director of Nutrinza, Warren Moffit says there are many benefits from feeding grain based supplements as maintaining a cow's body condition can have a positive impact on both production and fertility.

"Feeding grain for three weeks prior to calving lengthens the rumen papillae and that increases the absorption surface area in the rumen so there is a more efficient absorption of nutrients in the diet when the cow calves and starts lactation," says Moffit.

He says feeding grain supplements keeps up the energy intake of the cow in the last 7 days of gestation and this helps avoid the onset of ketosis by maintaining higher energy intake.

Moffit says the period after calving is also a time when farmers should consider supplementary feed as a way to utilise lower substitution rates so the cow can increase total dry matter intake, produce more milk and lose less body condition.

There is clear evidence that feeding grain based supplements helps reduce weight loss and that's more energy efficient than incurring weight loss that must rebuild in later lactation.

Of course finding regular, cost effective and reliable feeds can be a challenge. That's why the quality accreditation programme for animal feed was introduced by the New Zealand Feed Manufacturers Association (NZFMA) back in 2015.

The FeedSafe NZ programme tests the ingredients and processes used by feed manufacturers with audits conducted annually by AsureQuality. It includes an on-site audit of ingredients, plant, storage and operations and also tests that any additives are what they claim to be.

NZFMA Director Michael Brooks says, "We encourage farmers to consider the benefits of feeding supplements and to feed safe by only purchasing from an accredited FeedSafe NZ manufacturer. This is essential for the both the protection and the well-being of their animals and ensures the feed you buy is made to the highest possible standard."

Come and visit the NZFMA stand at Fieldays to check if the manufacturer and brand you buy is FeedSafe NZ accredited and chat to members about the economic advantages of feeding grain based supplements. You can also check out the FeedSafe NZ video at Fieldays Online, answer a simple question and be in the draw to win a year's supply of FeedSafe animal feed.