

Yeasts vital in fight against low rumen pH when grazing



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According to the latest research, it's now clear that rumen function and feed efficiency are under serious threat from low rumen pH and sub-acute ruminal acidosis (SARA) throughout the grazing season - not just in the spring!

It's a function of both modern, low fibre perennial ryegrass swards and the high ration energy density needed to support yields of 30 litres/cow or more. Regardless of how well rations are formulated, early to mid-lactation cows at grass are at high risk from low rumen pH and SARA.

A study across 12 farms in Ireland investigating the rumen pH of grazing cows supplemented with less than 2kg/day of concentrate found that only 47% had a rumen pH within the normal range (pH>5.8). In fact, 11% were already suffering from SARA and an additional 42% were at high risk of developing SARA.

A study of 100 grazing herds in Australia produced similar results, and a more detailed Austrian investigation found that just 3kg of concentrate fed twice daily during milking was enough to drop rumen pH below 5.8 - the point at which fibre digestion is compromised

- for a massive 347 minutes each day. This compared to just 26 minutes for cows fed grass only.

The costs associated with low rumen pH can be substantial, and include reduced feed intake, milk yield and butterfats, plus increased incidence of health issues like mastitis and laminitis. Yet when Vistacell live yeast is fed to help stabilise rumen pH, the yield increase alone - typically up to 2 litres/cow/day - far outweighs the additional cost.

It's therefore no surprise that many herds now routinely include Vistacell in rations year-round to protect early to mid-lactation performance. By promoting the growth of beneficial microbes in the rumen and discouraging those producing the lactic acid responsible for low rumen pH, Vistacell improves fibre digestion, feed efficiency and milk from forage.

Combined with in-parlour meals kept below 2kg/cow/day, use of feeds high in digestible fibre and possible inclusion of Acid Buf rumen conditioner to further stabilise rumen pH, is the foundation for a feeding strategy dedicated to maximising profitability this spring and summer.



For more information on Vistacell yeast visit www.abvista.com or phone 028 9447 3478.