

UNIT : THE BEEF COW – NUTRITION AND FEEDING

STAFF

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Unit is to highlight the importance of beef cow nutrition and to examine appropriate feeds and feeding strategies.

On completion of the Unit students will be able to describe the feed requirements of beef cows.

KEY WORDS

KEY PHASES IN THE PRODUCTION CYCLE - DRY COW AND PREPARATION FOR CALVING, LACTATION, CALVING TO CONCEPTION

DRY COWS AND PREPARATION FOR CALVING

- Spring calving cows - extended grazing, deferred grazing, stubbles, mature conserved forage
- Autumn calving cows - rough grazing, stubbles

LACTATION

- Spring calving cows – high quality grazing
- Autumn calving cows – high quality fodder
- Calf creep

CALVING TO CONCEPTION – recovery from calving, milk production, re-start heat / oestrus cycles, early recovery of body condition

TYPICAL FEEDS - Grazed grass, Silage or hay, Straw, Forage crops, By-products, Concentrates

FEED BUDGETING

RESOURCES

EBLEX (2007) Beef Action for Profit 21 – Better Returns from Reducing Metabolic Disorders

HCC (2006) Practical Beef Cattle Nutrition

Farming Connect (2008) Feed Budgeting for the Winter Nov 2008

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Typical rations for a 650kg dry cow (kg / day)

Feed	Silage only	Silage and straw	Straw, sugar beet pulp and maize gluten
Silage	27.2	15.0	
Barley straw		6.2	5.0
Sugar beet pulp			2.0
Maize gluten			2.5

Activity – calculation of feed requirements (and costs)

Typical rations for a 650kg milking cow (kg / day)

Feed	Silage	Straw, sugar beet pulp and maize gluten
Silage	40.0	
Straw		6.0
Concentrate	2.0	
Sugar beet pulp		2.0
Maize gluten		6.0