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MAKE RUMEN FUNCTION A TOP PRIORITY WHEN GRAZING

Faced with continuing low milk prices, dairy producers looking to boost margins by maximising milk from forage, reducing feed costs and minimising the post-turnout drop in milk quality are being urged to make rumen function a top priority this spring and summer.

“Optimising the efficiency with which forage is converted into milk has a massive impact on dairy unit profitability, and it starts with good rumen function,” states Dr Derek McIlmolye, AB Vista's Technical Director for GB and Ireland.

“The challenge following turnout is the poor fibre content in spring grass significantly increases the risk of low rumen pH, which compromises fermentation efficiency. Up to 16 litres of oxygen can also be mixed in with the feed consumed each day, which introduces aerobic conditions that are less than ideal.”

Any time rumen content drops below pH 5.8, or oxygen is introduced, the activity and numbers of the fibre-digesting microbes in the rumen are reduced. Optimising rumen conditions to best support these microbes is therefore critical to efficient forage fermentation.

“Correctly formulated buffer feeds are essential to reduce the risk of SARA at turnout, including the addition of a live yeast like Vistacell,” Dr McIlmolye

continues. "These metabolically active yeasts not only limit production of the lactic acid responsible for lowering rumen pH, but they also help maintain anaerobic conditions by absorbing oxygen in the rumen.

"Typical daily yield response can be as high as 2 litres/cow if the rumen is under severe pressure, such as following spring turnout, coupled with an improvement in butterfats due to improved fibre digestion. That's a significant gain in feed efficiency and milk from forage that will typically provide a return on investment of between 3:1 and 6:1 based on either a one or two litres increase in daily milk yield."

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Notes to editor:

AB Vista is an animal nutrition technology company offering pioneering products and technical services to the global animal feed industry. Since its establishment in 2004, AB Vista has grown to be a top-three player in feed enzymes and is also one of the largest suppliers of natural betaine to the global animal nutrition industry. The company invests heavily in research and development and has a growing portfolio of products and services spanning the poultry, swine, ruminant and aquaculture sectors. AB Vista is headquartered in the UK, with regional offices located in the USA, Brazil, Singapore, Spain, India, China, Germany and Finland.

AB Vista is part of AB Agri, the agricultural division of Associated British Foods, one of Europe's largest food & retail companies with a market capitalisation of £26 billion.

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