



360°

news from
advanced nutrition
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Developing a Positive Vision

As we come to the end of an extremely tough year in farming, I'm happy to report on some positive experiences the team at Advanced Nutrition have had over the past few months. The dairy industry has been affected by a huge amount of negativity but it is time to be positive and drive our businesses' forward.

The team attended the Farmers Weekly Awards, with clients Henry and Mark Lewis in October. Mark had been nominated for Farm Worker of the Year Award and had made it to the final three. It was great to be at an event where milk price was not discussed once; instead it was about celebrating achievement. In my career, when milk price has been low and farm income has been under serious pressure, it's the teams on farms that concentrate on detail, and getting the basics done well, that usually safe guard net profit most effectively. To do this you need a good team with clear and strong objectives, focused on the detail - even down to trough cleaning rotas. A very good example of this has been the team at Tack Farm led by Henry and of course Mark. So after a difficult year it was an honour to be in a place where we were able to nominate Mark and share in the evening with him.

In September Bryn crossed "over the pond" on a US study tour. He travelled east to Vermont, to see how the US Herds were sustaining their businesses in a global market. It proved to be an interesting trip as there was plenty to compare Vermont and UK producers. Both using grass forages with the cooler climate and more importantly having to deal with a depression in milk price, something Bryn thinks has actually made the Vermont producers more focused. All of the herds visited were selling between, 42 and 45 litres per cow, with an average calving index of 390 days. What was apparent from the



farm visits is that they all had a real focus on what effects profitability. If it needs changing, they change it and move forward. Their whole farm approach sees cow comfort at the top of the agenda.

The UK is certainly moving towards this positive approach only last week I was at the Welsh Dairy Show, discussing how to make changes within the herd for minimal cost.

At Advanced Nutrition we help our clients look for the inexpensive changes that can improve production without necessarily adding cost. In our Winter Newsletter we highlight the achievements of another one of our client's, Peter and Susan Morris at Greengatehouse Farm, Lockerbie. Our approach to animal nutrition, health and management as well as their hard work has helped the farm see increases in milk sold, milk from forage and farm profitability.

So as we approach a new year, remember nothing is impossible. Turn the negative into the positive and you'll reap the benefits!

Rob Watkins, Ruminant Nutritionist

Also in this issue...



Greengatehouse Farm, Lockerbie



Advanced Fusion



Winter Jobs



01524 263 139
www.arn-ltd.com
office@arn-ltd.com

Dairy Focus

Derek Merrylees and PJN & SM Morris, Greengatehouse Farm, Lockerbie

Derek Merrylees began working with Advanced Nutrition two years ago. His work in dairy nutrition has had a huge impact on his clients across Scotland. We focus on the results of his work with Peter & Susan Morris and family at Greengatehouse Farm as milk production has increased from an average of 9,700 litres to over 10,000 litres in little over a year, with the high yield group now achieving an average of 43 litres per cow per day. These improvements have gained the business an additional £115 per cow per year.



Derek Merrylees

Prior to working with Advanced Nutrition, Derek spent over seven years working with some of the largest and highest yielding dairy herds in Scotland. Following a two year feeding program with BOCM Pauls, he began working with dairy businesses helping to make them more profitable. Derek is FACTS qualified and an expert on fertility and grassland programs.

In 2015 he joined the team at Advanced Nutrition. *“What attracted me to the company was their whole farm approach, joining health and nutrition to improve all round performance of the herd. You can’t just fix parts of the business you have to look at all aspects.”* Indeed Derek’s answer if things aren’t working on farm - *“I rip up the sheet, start afresh, look at the environment and listen to what the cows are telling me. At that point I can work out what the bottlenecks are and set some KPIs to achieve an increase in daily lifetime yields within the herd.”*

This approach has helped a number of his clients, against a backdrop of sustained low milk prices. Derek’s skill lies in finding the right nutritional products to benefit the herd, all of which can be sourced from a range of suppliers, to keep cows healthy and ultimately producing more milk. One client that’s really seeing the benefits is the Morris family.

PJN & SM Morris, Greengatehouse Farm, Lockerbie

Herd: 160 milking Holstein cows

Diet: Grass silage, bespoke blend, Parlour Nut and Advanced Fusion

System: The high yielding cows are housed year round. To reduce production cost, the low yielders were grazed from spring to late summer this year

Contract: Arla

Derek began working with Peter and Susan Morris and their daughters, Joanna and Janet in May 2015. They needed help to increase milk production, as the cows just weren’t milking as well as they should and therefore not fulfilling their potential. Across the herd the cows were averaging 30 litres per cow per day.

Following a full farm assessment, Derek visited the Morris family on a weekly basis for the first couple of months and is currently visiting once every fortnight.

Providing the correct nutritional balance to this herd was key to the improvements on farm. The diet was adjusted, monitored and re-adjusted to produce results. Derek formulated a high energy TMR to compliment the grass silage and a highly palatable and rumen friendly nut called Advanced Robot 18 which they feed through the parlour.

Milk yield increased as a result of the whole diet being improved.

Advanced Fusion

Early on, Peter was clear that despite wanting to reduce production costs, he was not willing to reduce the quality of the feed to the cows. Derek suggested he tried incorporating the fats and minerals that were already part of the ration into one bespoke blend called Advanced Fusion. The product saved the Morris family 9p/cow/day in just the costs of the feed, that's approximately £400 a month. As a pre-blend it also saved on time and was easy to feed.

“Advanced Fusion has just simplified things for us. We buy one product, there's no need to mix lots of products together and we now only have to pop out once for deliveries at breakfast time instead of twice!” Peter Morris

Milk from forage

Derek is also working with the farm to push more milk from forage. Milk from forage has increased by 1201 litres and the farm is on target to achieve 3000 litres from forage by May 2017.

This was achieved by reducing the amount of concentrate but maintaining the energy level in the diet by increasing the supply of high quality home-grown forage steadily. Silage samples are regularly taken to determine any changes to DM content, energy and mineral levels allowing Derek to formulate the ACM accordingly.

Advanced Robot 18 Nuts

Advanced Robot Nuts, (formulation by ARN, designed to be fed through a robot system), have been fed in the parlour since May of last year. This high energy, high fibre nut was chosen as it's designed not to limit forage intake outside of the parlour and because it doesn't crumble readily it reduces any potential wastage.

Since working with Derek on improving the whole diet, the farm has seen:-

- An increase in milk sold by 401 litres
- An increase of milk from forage of 1201 litres to date
- An increase in profit of over £115 per cow in the year

Looking ahead

The past year, has certainly thrown up some challenges on farm. It's been essential to provide high quality nutrition but at an affordable price. It's all about choosing the right products for the farm, continually monitoring their effects, improving and adjusting the diet.

“Derek has helped us to take the business forward and increase milk yield. He's passionate about his work and most importantly if there's ever an issue on farm he's onto it, to make sure the production system keeps working.” Mr Morris



**If you'd like to see if Derek could help maximise your herd's potential. You can contact him:
m: 07787 444377 / e: derek@arn-ltd.com**

Get out what we put in

Advanced Fusion is a new concept in blended micro ingredients, consistently delivering the correct balance of nutrients to every cow in your herd.



Too much
yeast

Not enough
minerals

Just right
Advanced Fusion

Advanced Fusion ensures:-

1. Better Product Distribution

As a pre-mixed micro blend you get no loss of essential minerals

2. Greater Accuracy

Your bespoke formulation will ensure each cow gets the right amount of nutrients

3. Less Wastage

Precious minerals aren't blown away through mixing on farm and intakes are improved through a good mix

All resulting in maximised intakes, increased milk yields and a reduction in labour costs.

Jobs for the Winter

As Autumn comes to a close and the days get shorter, we look ahead to the winter to provide you with some hints and tips to maximise the health of your herd.

1. Do you have adequate lighting?

- Why not download a lux light meter app for your smart phone to establish levels of lighting in your buildings?
- Cows need 16 hours of at least 200 lux and about 8 hours of <50 lux.
- Make sure feeding areas, water troughs and lanes are well lit and that lighting doesn't produce shadowy areas or light reflective surfaces.
- Timing lights to come on prior to stockmen arriving can aid heat detection with cows being up and active.

2. Have you done a forage analysis?

- Forage analysis will change throughout winter as clamps continue to ferment and different fields and cuts are reached.
- Analyse forage when any sign of change is detected.

3. How's your heifer rearing?

- If you feel cold, then your calves are feeling cold too! Calf jackets keep calves warm so they have more energy for growth and to fight infection.
- Provide plenty of fresh clean bedding for effective insulation to reduce body heat loss.
- On very cold days, mix milk slightly warmer than 38°C to allow for cooling before the milk is fed.



For more hints and tips throughout the winter, follow us on Twitter [@arn_home](#) [#ARNWinterJobs](#)