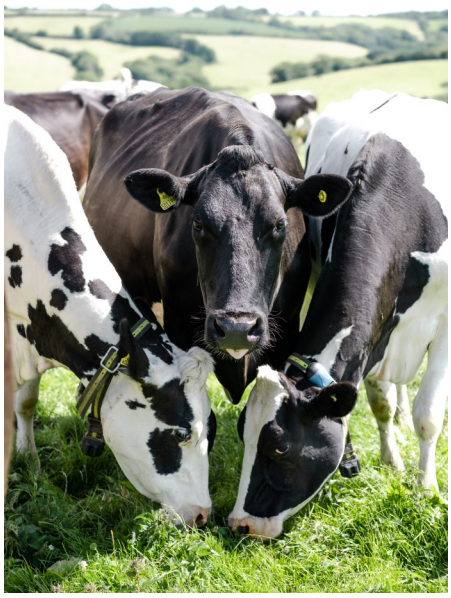
Welcome to our March newsletter

The last few months of not seeing people in person has been hard for us all but we were able to catch up with many of you via the phone or a zoom meeting. Our highlight was the silage meeting were we got to see so many familiar faces and have a good virtual discussion on silage making. Although we can't wait for an in person meeting, with a pasty and a pint, it was a great turn out and we are hoping to host another meeting via zoom soon. Thank you for taking part!

Can we turn out yet?

We are lucky enough to work with a wide range of farms, many of which will graze part or all of the herd. Whether you turn out all the cows or just graze young stock it is important we make the most of grazing.

Grazed grass can be a real asset to the diet if managed correctly. By focusing on grass management in early spring we see benefits extending to the autumn. Forming a grazing platform and not letting the grass get ahead of the cows means we get more consistent grass quality and also leafy grass that should continue to be of higher quality throughout the summer.



By keeping grass leafy in the spring, management is easier throughout the summer and we can reduce other feed inputs. As we know, grazed grass can be the cheapest form of feed, but that doesn't mean we should "waste" it or prevent it from fully meeting it's potential, after all it will have to be replaced with more expensive forages or concentrates if grass growth slows.

We know turn out depends on many things including weather, soil type but by setting up the grazing platform early, we should be able to manage the grass and keep it leafy for much more of the season.

If you have any questions the team are always happy to talk through ideas and questions, and can walk the fields to assess the grass too.

Our Vision is to Empower and Support our Farmers to Maintain a Healthy Herd and Busir
Sharing Scientific Knowledge and Expertise to Provide Targeted Solutions to the Farming

A view From A Far

Since December 2016, the company has been involved in a project on the Indian Subcontinent working alongside various Professors from Exeter University and the Madras Institute of Technology. The main aim of this study is to observe dairy faming in Southern India and suggest improvements that can be brought about in this sector of Agriculture.

For many years Exeter University has been placing business experts from different areas of industry in various parts of the world to see what influence they might have on a particular community. Their so-called "Impact Studies". Our involvement with both Exeter and Madras Universities has been one such project.

Unlike Northern India, particularly The Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat states, the areas we have been visiting, Tamil Nadu and Telangana in Southern India are regions where cow herd size is small, cow performance is poor, when compared to modern day standards and local Indian farming communities are very impoverished.

The attraction for us as a company in this project has been to link up with a world class educational establishment, such as Exeter University, enabling us to grasp this opportunity and make a difference to people whose lives are not as fortunate as our own.

It is true, as you will see in the following article, India has great potential to up it's game when it comes to food production and thus enabling it to feed its own population. This objective of self-sufficiency has been the backbone to Prime Minister Modi's push on improving Agricultural productivity. Initiatives such as The "White Revolution" and "Made In India" have tried to increase food availability to the Indian population, with some limited success.

Our own initiative has been to work with a local company in Karimnagar, Telangana, (Karimnagar Milk Producer Company Ltd) trying to help their 70,000 farmers become more viable. This project, assisted by The UK Department of International Trade has enabled us to recruit our first representative, Sailesh Chimkode, to help us communicate our many different messages and stories to the local dairy farming population.

To date, we have managed a modest rise in milk production, but more importantly, through better animal nutrition, we have dramatically improved animal health. All of this has been accompanied by the overriding reward of seeing how such small changes to cow husbandry can significantly improve animal welfare and the well-being of the families who care for them too.

So, I have asked Sailesh to put together a short article on his experiences working alongside us and his view on how our project is currently progressing in Southern India.

Steve Chapman

ness. We do this by Putting the Farmer First and
Community.

Impact of SC Nutrition Ltd in India

India ranks first among the world's milk producing nations since 1998 and has the largest bovine population in the world. Milk production in India during the period 1950-51 to 2017-18, has increased from 17 million tonnes (MT) to 176.4 MT. Although India is the world's largest milk producer, there are many challenges faced by the Indian dairy sector which include low fat and SNF content in milk, low milk yield, poor quality of feed & fodder, less availability of water 24X7 for the farm animals. The farmers in large parts of the country also face challenging environmental conditions with average temperatures of 36°C which often result in severe heat stress and associated conditions for their cows. The lack of education and specialised training to deal with these challenges leaves these farmers with very few options to make their dairy ventures profitable.

The dairy sector is currently growing at around 10-12% annually. Based on estimates of population growth and an increase in urbanisation for the next four decades, it is anticipated India needs around 600 million tonnes of milk per year to fulfil the demand for milk and milk products. This means India's milk production needs to grow at around 3.2% for the next 40 years.

The vast majority, about 70% of the cows in India are in the unorganised sector with individual farmers of small holdings having between two to five cows associated with large milk producers or co-operatives that arrange to collect and transport the milk to the Dairy for processing.

The entry of SC Nutrition Ltd to India, initially starting their operations in the Karimnagar District of the state of Telangana, have transformed these farmers lives. The milk producer we work with, has nearly 200,000 cows under their umbrella, spread out over a large geographical area which is a formidable challenge of logistics for us to reach out to.

SC Nutrition introduced a new feed concentrate for some of these farmers in February 2020. On my recent visits, I have met and interviewed a wide cross section of these farmers who have given me very positive feed-back. The farmers have said they have seen their milk yield nearly double within weeks of starting on this feed. The milk fat percentage and SNF have also sharply increased and the cows have become healthier. Some of the farmers have seen the fertility of their cows increase after giving this feed.

This has led to a substantial increase in farmers income for which they are very grateful to SC Nutrition. They look forward to working with us as a partner on the ground to further improve the health of their cattle and their profitability.

There is a huge requirement of supplying new & improved technology at the milk producer level which needs to filter down to the farmer level. SC Nutrition Ltd has stepped up to the challenge, and is now a key part of meeting these challenges, by adopting new, innovative, and improved technologies on the ground. The SC Nutrition team with their multi lingual approach, simple and easy to understand presentations, and with local teams on the ground have gained the farmers trust and have yielded many solutions that are low cost to implement but life changing for the farmers. I feel very proud and fortunate to be a small part of the team and to be part of this change.

Sailesh Chimkode

No Surprises At The Dinner Table

It's no secret that dairy cows thrive on routines that are consistent from day to day. Cows prefer a ration with consistent nutrient composition, fed at the same time each day, with feed always available when they want to eat.

Researchers from the University of Guelph (2014. J. Dairy Sci. 97:562-571) measured the day-to-day variation in ration nutrient composition on over 20 commercial dairy farms in Ontario to assess its relationship with feed intake and milk production. For every 0.5-unit increase in variability of dietary net energy measured over 7 days, dry matter intake decreased by 1kg/day and milk yield decreased by 3kg/day. It is eye-opening to see just how much ration variability reduces milk yield.

When we consider ration particle size, the same researchers found that for every 5 percentage-unit increase in variability for the long particles retained on the 19-mm sieve (top screen) of the Penn State Particle Separator, milk yield decreased over 1.1kg/day. Clearly, cows prefer uniformity in both dietary composition and particle distributions.

When the ration is delivered appears to matter to the cow as well. Ideally, the TMR should be delivered within 15 minutes of the scheduled feeding time each and every day, and no more than 15 minutes after the previous day's feed has been pushed out.

Feed should also be uniformly delivered along the entire length of the feed bunk. If a cow's preferred portion of the bunk is empty, time-lapse video data suggests that due to social constraints she often won't go to another portion of the feed bunk that has feed.

So, if we think of the feed bunk as the cow's dinner table, the bottom line is that cows do best with the exact same entrée, served at the precise same time every day, and at a time that best fits her needs.

Adapted from Rick Grant

Grass in Cornwall

22.4	Dry Matter %
19	Crude Protein %
11.4	ME
42	NDF %
12.3	Sugar %

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