

## **important aspects to remember when lot feeding:**

**Acidosis** : Acidosis is one of the most common problems that vets encounter in a dairy herd. As a rule of thumb it is safe to feed up to 50% of intakes as a **well buffered** grain/concentrate feed (there are situations where this level can be exceeded but you should seek advice from your nutritionist). Indicators of acidosis are :

\* *Butterfat % lower than protein %* \* *Very loose, brown, nasty smelling dung* \* *Less than 30% of herd chewing cud* \*

**Trough Space**: Ensure each cow has 600mm space at the trough (or wherever you are feeding out) to allow all cows access to feed.

**Feed Wastage** : Feeding large amounts of forage in the paddock can be costly in terms of feed wastage. It has been estimated up to 30% wastage can occur when feeding in a paddock. Even an off set hot wire along the fenceline can save a considerable amount of feed by preventing cows from trampling on it.

**Forage Quality** : Forage quality is always important, but in a year when protein supplements are likely to be expensive, it is worth looking at your forage conservation management, perhaps consider the use of a silage inoculant to ensure maximum nutrients are conserved in the silage you are making. Bought in fodder should ideally be purchased on the basis of a forage feed analysis = feed test.

**Silage Spoilage** : Old, uneaten silage in a feed trough can reduce cow intakes considerably by tainting the new feed put on top of it. Ensure that old uneaten silage is cleaned out of troughs at least once a week, preferably more often.

**Water Quality** : This is often overlooked. If you rely on ground water as your drinking water source it is worth getting it tested for salt and iron content annually. Water troughs should be cleaned regularly and water flow measured to ensure it is adequate for your herd size.

\* *during January/February a cow can require up to 250 litres per day hot temperatures* \*