

## YEAST - IS IT WORTH USING?

Yeast - some people swear by it and some people swear at it! I wondered why, so I decided to do some research. I evaluated all the yeasts on the market to try and find the best one to recommend to our customers.

The mystery surrounding yeast is that it seems to work some of the time, but not others. We think this is mainly due to two reasons. One is because yeasts vary enormously, and the other is because it works better in certain situations.

Yeast works by increasing the number and activity of rumen bacteria. This in turn maintains a stable rumen pH so the rumen is more efficient. The result is higher dry matter intakes and better fibre digestion. From this we get more milk, higher fats and healthier animals.



Generally, poor responses to yeast are in high forage rations with low starch and low acid loading. Conversely, best results come from high concentrate rations, especially with high levels of starch and sugar, and from dry diets. Here are some typical feeding situations where yeast is likely to work:

- Bread and/or sweet mix - rapid release starch
- Cereals rolled or milled - quick release starch
- Fodder beet - quick release sugars
- Fermented whole crop - quick release starch
- Potatoes - quick release starch
- Dry silage -high oxygen intakes
- High lactic acid silage
- High starch maize silage
- High starch parlour cakes
- More than 3kgs per feed of parlour cake

There are more, but too many to print here. Also, combining several of the above means it is more likely yeast is needed.

So now we know where the feeding regime cries out for yeast to help. But which one is the correct one? Yeast supplies colony-forming units (cfu's). These are the things that help the bugs we want in the rumen to multiply. So we are basing our research on finding the yeast that supplies the most cfu's, and has lots of trial data to support the efficacy of the product. We looked at 10 products. What was interesting was that some of the best advertised yeasts had very low levels of cfu's. In fact, the one we recommend has 10-40 times more cfu's than a well-known product. Both are the same price per cow per day.

Our favourite has a wealth of trial data on dairy, beef and sheep.

Average of 7 farms on 610 cows

Fat increase (% of control)	Protein increase (% of control)	Milk (control) (Litres/day)	Increased yield over control (Litres/day)
+4.2	+4.1	26.6	+0.91

Average of 13 farms on 541 cows

Fat increase (% of control)	Protein increase (% of control)	Milk (control) (Litres/day)	Increased yield over control (Litres/day)
+4.6	+4.9	27.1	+1.53

Also, at New Farm, Telford, Shropshire a 9500 litre herd of 400 cows had a 7% increase in milk from 40.6 litres to 43.5 litres. The ration was maize silage, grass silage, waste bread, blend, fat and nutritionally improved straw. Milk fat and protein also increased.

Since researching this topic, I have used this yeast on an intensive bull beef unit. Faster finishing and a massive reduction in bloat was the result.

Now we come to the second reason why yeast works in some cases. If you are using a product 10 - 40 times weaker than another product, what can you expect?

To summarise -

Look at your feeding system and feeds to decide if yeast could work for you. That's assuming you want more milk, butterfat, protein and healthier cows. We can advise you if it is correct to use.

Use the one that offers the highest cfu's.

Want to know which one? Give me a ring and I will tell you.