



# R.M. JONES Newsletter

FARMCENTRES

[www.rmjones.com](http://www.rmjones.com)

September 2024

## The Start of the Sheep Year

*“You only get one chance a year to raise a lamb crop and make a profit – you have to get it right first time”*

Tupping time marks the start of the farming year all over again and provides the foundation for a potential profitable lamb crop five months down the line.

How you manage your flock over the next couple of months will be key to a successful lambing and a profitable lamb crop.

Ewe body condition influences ovulation rate and so has a significant affect on the number of ewes that become pregnant and eventually carry their lambs through to lambing time.

### Preparation for Topping

Offering **Sheep Natural Energy** alongside grass at this time of year can help support ewe body condition score. The combination of minerals, vitamins and trace elements including **selenium, zinc, iodine** and **cobalt** balance deficiencies often seen in grazing. **Sheep Natural Energy** also contains **Omega-3 fatty acids** from fish oil for optimal fertility.

**Sheep Natural Energy** is also suitable for finishing lambs on forage and/or root systems – offering extra energy and protein to support lamb growth.

### What about Trace elements?

Boost **Cobalt, Selenium** and **Iodine** levels with **Downland Essential Sheep bolus** – releases trace elements every day for **6 months**.

**Trace elements** and **Vitamins** also available with **Optigain** drench. Inadequate **Cobalt** at Topping reduces Lamb vitality at birth.

### Think about Resistant Worms

Incorporating a newer wormer active, such as a Group 4 Orange or Group 5 wormer, as part of worming routines as a late season ‘break dose’ will help clear out any worms that may have survived previous treatments earlier in the season. This will help optimise lamb performance, allowing them to make the most of late season grass.

### Clear out Scab & Worms

Talk to us about the best treatments as not all ewes will need a wormer at this time of year and there are some resistance issues for injectables against scab.

# Arable Update – September

## Comments

The new cropping year is rolling relentlessly forward. There is a reasonable amount of uncertainty about where the crop market is going, what farm budgets will look like and how best to respond to these uncertainties - do we crop more intensively, look harder at SFI, plant more grass or forage crops. There is no right or wrong answer.

## Tasks

### OSR

- Flea Beetle, flea beetle, flea beetle... Last month we put some technical suggestions forward for mitigating CSFB pressure. Obviously in-field checks are still crucial, the use of yellow water traps will help monitor the risk and when thresholds for treatment are reached.

### Cereals

- Spring cereals have charged through the growth stages and look reasonably decent. Keep an eye out for late disease.

### Forage Crops

- Over the last few years Brome and Vol Wheat pressure has been growing in Winter Barley crops. There is increasing evidence that ploughing before the establishment of Winter Barley may reduce the seed return and keep crops cleaner. Creating a stale seedbed, destroying volunteers with Glyphosate and delaying drilling will work but does require a little more patience.

## Seed:

We will be running a couple of arable events this autumn including

- Trip out to the Croptec Show (27th Nov)
- Fertiliser planning and Crop Marketing talk (Mid Dec)
- Farm field walk (TBC)

If you are interested in any of these events please let us know. If there are other event topics that would be useful then, again, let us know.

**UK LIFFE Wheat Nov24**

£180 - £185/t

**MATIF OSR Nov24**

£385 - £390/t

**AN34.5% Fertiliser**

£335- £340/t

**Current wheat GS**

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**Current OSR GS**

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## Technical Corner – Slug Pellets

After the ban of Metaldehyde in 2022 the use of ferric phosphate (iron sulphate) slug pellets as a replacement has increased. There are a number of different brands of pellets available with varying formulations which can be confusing. So here is a little bit of information to help answer some of those unanswered questions:

- What is best practice for slug control?** Adopt an integrated pest management approach. Start by monitoring populations to threshold (OSR= 1 slug/m<sup>2</sup>; Cereals = 5 slugs/m<sup>2</sup>), utilise cultivations, reduce trash residues, avoid cloddy seedbeds, roll/consolidate the seedbed to restrict movement, control volunteers, choose vigorous varieties and finally, if required, utilise the appropriate slug pellets, pre-baiting would be beneficial where populations are high.
- How do ferric phosphate pellets work?** Iron phosphate (IP) is paired with a chelating agent (EDTA/EDDS) which ensures uptake of the active ingredient into the gut of slugs. The IP damages the gut lining and stops feeding. To ensure efficient uptake pellets are formulated on a 1:1 optimal ratio of iron phosphate to chelating agent. Better quality pellets release this ratio consistently over time.
- How many pellets does a slug need to consume?** 1 pellet per slug. There should be 45-50 baiting points/pellets per m<sup>2</sup>. Ideally spread pellets at no more than 12m for greatest accuracy on 24m tramlines.
- Does pellet size matter?** Yes, larger pellets have better ballistic properties and carry more baiting points. Most pellet spreaders in the UK are quad mounted with motorised applicators. If pellet integrity is poor, then they will shatter and degrade more quickly.
- How long do pellets last?** This is dependent on slug pressure and pellet integrity. Well formulated pellets will withstand full submersion tests for over 45hrs meaning they last longer in the field, up to 2 weeks under ideal conditions.
- Does ferric phosphate harm wildlife?** No! Iron phosphate itself is NOT toxic to humans, non-target organisms or the environment.