



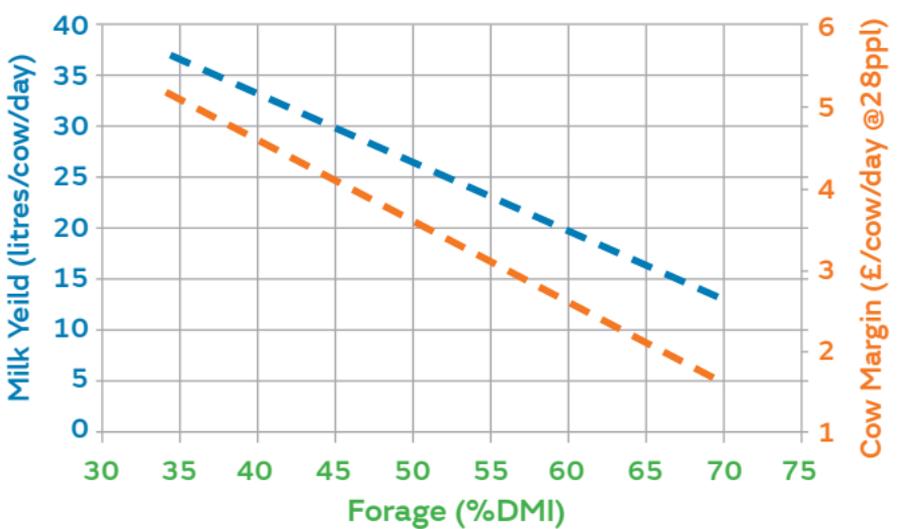
# The Rumen Friendly Approach

By Greg Leishman,  
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With the farming world on alert that the forage shortage could have serious short and long term effects for farmers across the country, Harbro are on hand to offer the best advice to maintain performance at this time.

We're currently working with customers to assess forage stocks and develop individual herd rations designed to make the most of the feed materials available. One key piece of advice that we're giving farmers is that there are safe ways of feeding higher concentrates when forage is limited and the cost of production is no more than feeding higher levels of forage.

Because milk yield is driven by energy, the higher the energy density of the ration the more milk you can produce. So, although there is a place for high quality forages in these rations, for the typical UK dairy farm, concentrates will always provide more energy than any home-grown forage. For this reason, the more concentrates you can safely feed, the higher your milk yield will be, the more money you will make and the higher your feed efficiency.



**Graph shows the effect of forage, as a percentage of dry matter intake on milk yield and cow margin in the UK dairy herd.**

We would recommend that farmers seek advice before making such changes to their rations as there are a multitude of variables that need to be considered before a tailored feed programme is designed.

The most important consideration when running low forage rations is to ensure that the concentrates being fed are as safe as possible without sacrificing energy supply by relying on low energy fibre feeds. In our experience, the only way to maximise performance on a low forage ration is to use high levels of an alkaline feed such as Maxammon grain, which is not only high in energy and protein (16% on a DM basis) but also has a pH of 9 that helps buffer the rumen and significantly reduce the risk of acidosis.

Another useful tool we use to assess the current situation on farm is Milk Monitor. By regularly collecting data and analysing trends, the programme allows us to measure herd financial and milk performance and identify measures that can be implemented to improve performance and ultimately profitability. This is all done at the same time as promoting the health and well being of the cow, an approach that we call 'Rumen Friendly.'

**Get in touch to find out more about how you can maximise performance on farm using a high concentrate ration:**

**01888 545200 [www.harbro.co.uk](http://www.harbro.co.uk)**