

## DEDICATION, DETERMINATION AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL THE ONLY WAY TO TURN OUT TUPS

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Many factors have to be considered when turning out tups, including: genetics, conformation, body condition, feet, feeding, fertility

and health. It takes great determination, meticulous attention to detail and utter dedication to bring everything together.

The process begins with choosing the next line of genetics. There has to be a selection of desirable genetics, physical characteristics and well conformed animals to choose from. Selecting animals only on figures or physical traits is risky and a balanced view should be taken on both.

Animals must be healthy if they are to thrive and fulfil their genetic potential. It's important to keep flock vaccinations and treatments up to date and let buyers know the current health status. Fertility is also of huge importance when it comes to selling tups and needs consideration from when the lambs are still young; running lambs out with a few ewes will encourage them to work later on.

### Feeding

Maintaining consistent growth throughout life is the goal, and this should start with the introduction of creep feed while the lambs are still with their mothers. Feeding creep enables the rumen to develop quickly and fully and also allows for a smooth transition at weaning.

The ideal condition for selling tups is fit not fat; overfed, fat tups are likely to have reduced reproductive performance. The type of feed should be chosen based on quality ingredients and palatability. Coarse mixes always look and smell appetising but may not always be practical, especially where large groups of shearlings are being turned out.

Our Clover range of sheep feed has been developed in partnership with the pedigree sheep world. Maxammon Clover Kelso Tup & Lamb is the flagship product, with the following features making it ideal for feeding to breeding lambs and shearlings on the lead up to sale day:

- The 'rumen friendly' nut, created from coarsely ground ingredients is easily digested.
- The product contains Maxammon treated cereal which stabilises rumen pH, allowing higher levels of starch to be fed.
- Quality protein sources have been used to optimise muscle growth.
- Includes Evo which is proven to reduce stress and increase appetite
- Fish oil aids hair and skin quality and boosts fertility.

### Farm success

Dalchirla Farms have been using Maxammon Clover Kelso Tup & Lamb since 2012 to turn out Blackface shearlings, Blackface tup lambs and Texel cross Beltex shearlings. Ian Hunter commented 'Maxammon

Clover Kelso Tup & Lamb does exactly the job we want it to do, leaving the tups with a great bloom and tight skins. Given the great results we get with this feed, **I wouldn't risk feeding anything else'.**



### Top tips for feeding tups:

- Feed a little concentrate, often
- Feed at the same times each day
- Don't change feed for final 6 weeks before sale day
- Make roughage (hay or straw) available in a feed ring when housed indoors
- Manage grazing so sward is kept between 4-8cm
- Ensure fresh, clean water is always available
- Provide plenty shelter to keep tups cool
- Don't mix social groups of tups

Exceptional stockmanship, dedication, determination and attention to detail is key to turning out top quality stock for sale. By using Maxammon Clover Kelso Tup & Lamb 16% nuts as part of their strategy, producers have the opportunity to present tups which are well bred, properly fed and ultimately go on to perform for their buyers.

# KEEPING HILL FARMING ALIVE ON DUNALASTAIR ESTATE



Scottish hill farming can produce top quality livestock from essentially low in-put systems. At Dunalastair Estate near Kinloch Rannoch, Farm Manager Finlay McIntyre is achieving just this through breed selection, good grassland management and ensuring stock are getting access to the right nutrition.

*Finlay McIntyre with his suckler herd*

Covering 16,000 acres, the estate is home to 2,000 predominately Blackface and some North Country Cheviot ewes and 130 Luing suckler cows. Due to the marginal nature of the landscape, the majority of land is hill/rough grazing, with in-by paddocks laid to grass which is used for silage.

Harbro's Three Step Sheep Nutrition buckets were recommended by Harbro beef and sheep specialist David Allan back in 2018 after the harsh winter left some ewes lacking in key nutrients. "After the 'Beast from the East' we noticed a lot of the ewes were lacking in energy and had lost condition over the winter months," says Finlay. "We introduced Harbro's Energyze Vitality bucket around March to help provide the ewes with instant energy and supplement the forage deficiencies from the harsh weather conditions."

Despite only using the buckets for just over a year, Finlay has seen a number of benefits, including a reduced number of empty ewes at scanning, as well fewer issues with Twin Lamb Disease. Ewes are lambed outside, with a small batch commencing around 20th April and the remainder of the flock lambing from 1st May. "I can count on one hand the number of ewes we have had to assist this year. They have had plenty fluid, with lambs being born wet, getting on to their feet quickly and suckling in no time at all," states Finlay.

By autumn 2018, the flock had been through each of our Three Step Sheep Nutrition buckets. Feet & Fertility was offered to the ewes in early autumn with the aim to improve foot health and enhance fertility and Forage Booster was introduced

from pre-topping through winter to support forage intake and provide extra feed energy and calories when forage quality is poor. Vitality is then provided from early February right through the lambing season.

Lambs are weaned early September and sent to grazing near Morayshire. They are grazed on grass and stubble turnips until the turn of the year, when they are given access to Harbro's Clover Lamb Feeder with Rumitech. Clover Lamb Feeder has a great reputation for finishing lambs and is one of our 'Rumen Friendly' feeds. Rumitech is included, which increases feed efficiency and utilisation, which in turn reduces the cost per kilo gain and the overall purchased feed requirement.

"Hoppers are put in with the lambs in the new year and I have noticed a **massive difference in the killing out percentage** of our lambs since introducing Clover Lamb Feeder with Rumitech. Lambs are averaging 20.5kg deadweight and are marketed as Highland Glen Mey Select through Dunbia," says Finlay.

And it's not only the sheep that are showing positive results with the Luing cattle at Drumalastair proving to be a low input breed.

The herd are outwintered and receive silage alongside Super Suckler buckets before calving in March. Once calved, they receive 1-1.5kg of our Super Suckler cow rolls with silage and Energyze Cattle buckets to give them a small boost until the grass quality starts to improve. This spring, 120 cows calved with no assistance needed. Like the ewes, Finlay says the cows had good quality colostrum and calves were born

wet, with plenty vigour and willingness to get onto their feet and suckle. David Allan explained the benefits of feeding the Super Suckler range: "Offering Super Suckler pre and post calving helps ensure the herd is receiving a nutrient balanced diet during the vital period of production. The mineral helps combat any deficiencies in available forages which leads a number of benefits including easier calving, improved colostrum quality and tightening the total calving period," said David.

Calves are weaned at the back end of the year with heifers outwintered and fed our Beefstock nuts with Rumitech. Any heifers not selected as replacements for the herd are sold in May at Dingwall Highland Marts breeding sale. This year's sale saw the progeny from 2018 average £950.

Bullocks are housed at weaning and are sold through the store ring at Aberdeen and Northern Marts March/April sales with an average of £740 for their 2018 crop of calves.

As well as receiving regular visits from David Allan, Finlay is a loyal customer at our Country Store in Perth where he purchases most of the animal health products for the estate. "The staff and service at the Perth Country Store is second to none. Every time I go in for products the team are efficient and very helpful," comments Finlay. "We buy the majority of our vet and med goods through the store and they have a large selection on offer. "I think it's really important to support local country stores and it's great to have one in the Perth area," Finlay concludes.

# COMBINING NUTRITION AND MANAGEMENT TO GET THE BEST OUT OF GENETICS

The concept of epigenetics is a simple one. All lambs are born with the same genetic potential and genes are either switched on or off in the first 6 days of gestation.

Genes can be altered by supplying the ewe and tup with methyl groups, supplied by a range of different substances. This epigenetic process is particularly important in early life as cells are first receiving their instructions that will dictate their future job. It's worth bearing in mind, these processes can also be influenced by environmental factors such as diet and stress.

If we get the genes we want turned ON and the genes we don't want turned OFF, we see an increase in performance, including:

- ↑ scanning %
- ↑ colostrum quality and quantity
- ↑ % live lambs
- ↑ suckling and vocalisation
- ↑ energy metabolism
- ↑ growth, finish and carcass confirmation
- ↑ health and longevity

Scientific trials kicked off the development of our 3 step sheep nutrition solution, formulated to provide a product to produce the desired epigenetic effects within an easy to use range of buckets.

On the run up to tugging we recommend Feet & Fertility which supplies essential trace elements and vitamins that your flock will need:

- Fish oil - fertility and immunity**
- Biotin - hoof condition**
- Sel-plex - fertility and immunity**
- Zinc - hoof health**
- Choline - foetal development**

Of course, you cannot just throw out the buckets and leave them to it. They are part of the strategy to give you the extra edge. Some epigenetic changes are stable and last a lifetime and some may be passed on from one generation to the next. This benefits your enterprise now, in years to come when superior replacements filter through and the enterprises of customers who buy your tups, hoggs and gimmers. Ultimately, we have a responsibility as an industry to ensure our genetics are as good as they possibly can be and then to make the most of them.



**Feed Spring to Autumn pre-tugging/at tugging to ewes and tups.**

## INCREASED CARCASS CONFORMATION WITH CLOVER LAMB FEEDER

Clover Lamb Feeder contains RumiTech - a unique additive that makes the rumen more efficient.



A trial was designed to determine whether our Clover Lamb Feeder would out-perform the existing home mix system on farm for finishing lambs.

Blackface lambs were chosen if they fell in a weight range between 26-40kg and were not lame or ill. They were split into 2 groups, balancing for weight and sex. The control group were fed home-mix (whole barley, soya and Action Intensive Yeast + Acid-buf) which was restricted for the first week to prevent gorging as per normal practice then fed ad-lib. The treatment group were built up to ad lib Clover Lamb Feeder.

### Trial conclusion:

The treatment group had leaner animals which results in better carcass conformation (higher value carcasses.)

Treatment	3L	3H	4L	4H	TOTAL
U	1	12	3		16
R	19	42	15		76
O		1			1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>93</b>

Control	3L	3H	4L	4H	TOTAL
U	1	13	8		22
R	5	41	22	3	71
O	1	1			2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>95</b>

# THREE STEP SHEEP NUTRITION SOLUTION DELIVERS LAMBING SUCCESS ON ISLAY

Andrew Jones has been at Coull Farm, Islay for 10 years now, and is into his 2nd full year of contract farming. His father was the farm manager previously, and had lived here for more than 40 years. Coull is a hard farm to farm, as Andrew explains:

"We're bound by the sea at three sides, and we've to deal with sand, peat and rocks - sometimes all in the same field." Andrew currently farms around 1,000 ewes over 2,000 acres.

Just over a year ago, Andrew made the decision to switch all his feed to Harbro - his father had previously used a bit of Harbro feed, but this was the first time the farm had made a wholesale change. As the farm is now run in trust, Andrew has to ensure his business is efficient and profitable. He first spoke with Fiona Shaw, store manager at our Lochgilphead store in the summer of 2018, and after discussions with her, had enough confidence to say that he'd exclusively switch to our feed for a year to see what happened.

Andrew quickly built up a relationship of trust with Fiona:

"Within a few months I knew I'd be sticking with Harbro, both for the quality of the feed and also for their advice. Fiona has the back-up of a full technical nutritional team

at Harbro, so if there's anything she can't answer, she'll speak with them before coming back to me."

One of the main products Andrew has had success with is our Three Step Sheep Nutrition buckets.

"Fiona said that feeding Feet & Fertility before tupping would tighten up lambing, and that certainly was the case - most of the ewes were settled in the 1st cycle, and in one day we had 70 ewes lamb, producing 109 lambs, with only one dead that day - the mortality rate was next to nothing."

Feet & Fertility is designed so more ewes hold to the first mating and have larger crops of lambs. A lamb's genetic potential is determined in the first 6 days of gestation; Feet & Fertility ensures the performance genes are switched on, using the concept of epigenetics. This means lambs are more virulent at birth and perform better throughout their life.

"We feed Energyze Vitality pre and post lambing and that has certainly meant



stronger lambs for us - they're up and on their feet much faster than in previous years. We left the Swaledale x Blackface ewes outside and were lucky if we saw them once a week - 22 ewes came in with 41 lambs. We had very little shepherding to do, we only had to get into the fields when there were triplets.

Fiona has really become part of our on-farm planning team - she anticipates what we'll need and ensures there's enough stock in to make sure we don't go short. She's not afraid to challenge me, ultimately giving me the information I need and leaving me to make the decisions myself. **Any price differential is more than offset by the increase in bottom line.**



## Our nationwide network of Country Stores

Our Country Stores stock a wide range of livestock feed as well as:

- Animal health products
- Farm equipment and hardware
- Workwear and country clothing
- Vaccines, boluses and drenches

Each store has a Suitably Qualified Person (SQP) who is an animal medicines advisor and can recommend and supply certain veterinary medicines. Our friendly team are also trained to advise on cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, equine and pets.



Three ways to get in touch:  
Call your Harbro specialist.  
Call our Phone Support team 01463 701995.  
Visit your local Harbro Country Store.