

10

Supplements for milking cows

This chapter:

Explains how to select a supplement based on its nutrient composition.

The main points in this chapter:

- factors to consider when deciding on which supplements to use:
 - what is the limiting nutrient in the diet?
 - which supplements are available and what is their nutrient composition?
 - what are the practical considerations of feeding?
 - how will a supplement affect the balance of the diet?
- feeds can be classified as energy supplements, protein supplements, basal forages and forage supplements
- tables of feed composition show the wide variation in energy and protein content in feeds
- chemical treatment of low quality roughages can improve their nutritive value but unsupplemented, they will not support high milk yields.

It is unlikely that the entire diet of milking cows will consist of just one forage. These other feeds are called supplements to the major forage source. If there is no major forage source, all feeds could be considered as supplements. This chapter addresses some practical and nutritional considerations involved in the use of different supplements.

10.1 Choice of supplement

Several supplement types are fed to dairy cattle. The decision on which supplement is determined by a combination of factors, such as:

- What is the limiting nutrient: energy, protein, fibre or a combination of all three?
- What supplements are available?