

A guide to improving herd health with Tracesure™ Cu/I

Will suckler calves, on cows that have received Tracesure Cu/I, get the trace elements in the bolus via the cow's milk?

▶ Yes, up to six months from administration. Ruminating suckler calves can then be bolused with the Tracesure calf triple pack at four months. This supplements their diet for three months, or until they are 200kg, when they can be given the adult dose of Tracesure Cu/I.

Increased levels of selenium, cobalt, iodine and copper are needed to help cows improve metabolism at and around calving, and also to help them cleanse once calved. Post calving the cow generates a peak of milk but can't eat enough dry matter to maintain her body weight. How can you ensure enough supplementation of trace elements during this period?

▶ Bolus your cows with Tracesure Cu/I two months before calving. Cows over 550kg will need a double application. The boluses last up to six months. Bolus cows with Tracesure Cu/I at turnout, and again at housing. This gives them 12 months cover and ensures cover during calving and service.

Young stock for breeding or for finishing need to achieve optimum daily liveweight gains. To achieve such growth rates proper supplementation of selenium, cobalt, iodine and copper is needed. How do you ensure such supplementation, especially at grass?

▶ Bolus at turnout, and again at housing, with Tracesure Cu/I. They must be over 200kg. Lighter ruminating calves can be given the Tracesure calf triple pack.

Forages high in goetrogenic substances such as kale, soya, fodder beet and red clover inhibit the uptake of iodine. Bull libido can thus be suppressed, leading to less production of semen. How can this fertility problem be overcome?

▶ Bolus all bulls over 200kg with Tracesure Cu/I every six months. Bulls over 550kg will require double applications each time.

Cattle that have difficulty in cleansing post calving also have difficulty in conceiving and are less able to produce milk. How can we provide ample supplementation of selenium, cobalt, iodine and copper for a prolonged period to ensure optimum milk yield?

▶ Bolus all cows with Tracesure Cu/I at drying off, or at housing and turnout, as is the case with suckler cows. Trials by an independent vet, John Cook, demonstrate 70% reduction in retained cleansings among cows bolused with Tracesure and also a significant 225kg of extra milk per cow in the first 100 days of lactation, which he attributes to the Tracesure boluses.

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Tracesure® Bolus Range

Tracesure Boluses

Beef farmer swaps minerals for boluses after on-farm experiment

A pedigree beef producer who stopped feeding minerals to his herd after proving that trace element boluses delivered comparable health benefits says he is making annual cost savings of nearly £26 an animal.

Stephen Illingworth conducted his own experiment while wintering 50 Limousins in a shed off-farm. He bolused this group with Tracesure Cu/I before housing and fed minerals to a similar size group housed on-farm.

"We had rented a shed away from the farm and it would have been extra work to give them minerals every day so I decided to bolus them instead," says Mr Illingworth.

"At the end of the winter we looked at both groups and there was no difference whatsoever in their health

status."

Since then he has not used any minerals within the herd. "The stock get bolused every six months and over that period you are roughly looking at two to three pence per cow per day for a bolus against 10p plus for minerals."

Mr Illingworth and his wife, Helen, have been running a beef herd at Howgillside, Eaglesfield, near Lockerbie, for 13 years after moving to the area from Yorkshire.

They have built up the enterprise that includes the Glenrock herd of 80 pedigree Limousin suckler cows and 200 followers.

The cattle are housed from October to May when they are fed a diet of silage. The cows with calves at foot get an additional ration of straights.

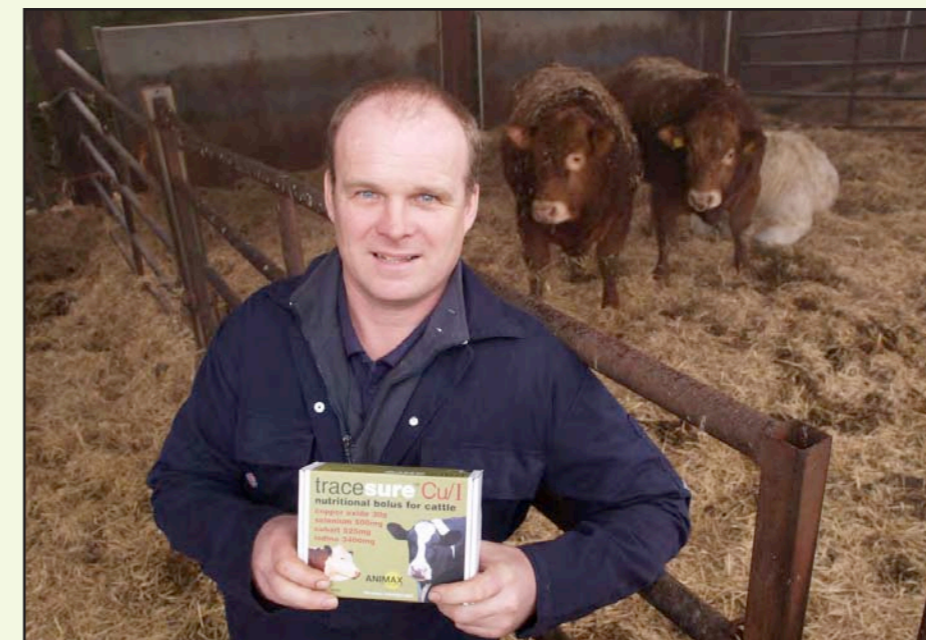
The herd is bolused before turnout and again before housing. Mr Illingworth says bolusing is more convenient than feeding minerals and it guarantees an accurate dosage.

"If each cow is getting 150g of minerals a day you have to measure this out and you don't know which animals are getting it. Bolusing is done in one go and you know that the animals have had everything they need."

The focus is on breeding a well-muscled animal that's good on its legs with good confirmation and a high growth rate. Docility and ease of calving are important too.

One of the challenges they have had to cope with since moving to their farm in Dumfriesshire is high rainfall and also the very damp air that makes the cattle prone to pneumonia. Mr Illingworth says that, for this reason, it is doubly important that his cattle get the right level of trace elements. "If an animal is short of trace elements it is more prone to pneumonia. The health status of the animal is imperative to keeping it free from infection and disease," he says.

"We haven't done blood tests to see if there are any deficiencies but that cattle have done as well with the boluses so that is proof enough."



Cost saving: Since supplementing with Tracesure™ boluses, Stephen Illingworth no longer feeds minerals to the herd.

ANIMAX
veterinary technology

Fertility up by 10% in top beef herd thanks to Tracesure™ Cu/I boluses



Andy Ryder boluses his whole herd with Tracesure before turnout and again before winter housing.

A farmer who produces some of the UK's top Belgian Blue cattle using embryo transplant techniques says fertility levels have improved by 10% since he started supplementing the herd's diet with a trace element bolus.

Andy Ryder, who runs a pedigree herd of 160 cows in Dumfriesshire, says Tracesure Cu/I has not only improved fertility in his recipient heifers but he reckons he is getting better results because selenium in the bolus may enhance the survival rate of the bulls' sperm.

"It has been proved that if the bull has good levels of selenium the sperm will last a lot longer, which is important to us for our embryo transfer work," says Mr Ryder, who is vice-president of the British Belgian Blue Society.

The whole herd is bolused before turnout and again before winter housing. If the calves are big enough – 200kg-plus – they get a bolus too.

Before he started using Tracesure, Mr Ryder had dosed the herd with a copper supplement. He then discovered that, for a small additional cost, the Tracesure bolus supplied iodine, cobalt and selenium too. "It costs us an extra 90p and the benefits speak for themselves in the results," he says.

Mr Ryder, who farms 5,000 acres at Newton Farm, Moffat, in partnership with his brother, Brian, has seen the herd's fertility rate at first service rise from 65% to 75%.

He buys pure Belgian Blue recipient heifers for implanting embryos at between 18 and 20 months. As soon as they arrive on farm the heifers are given a Tracesure Cu/I bolus and also treated for worms and fluke.

Mr Ryder admits embryo transfer is expensive but it guarantees the best stock. "If we want 10 pedigree cows we only have to flush one cow but to



The Ryder herd is bolused for growth and fertility.

buy those cows would cost us around £60,000," he says.

He always uses Belgian Blues on the crossbred cows and the results are apparent in the herd status. The Ryders produce some of the best prime stock cattle and bulls in the country. They are also one of the top producers of heifers. For the last four years they have been in the top three herds in the country for progeny registration.

Mr Ryder focuses on breeding a good butcher's animal, achieving some of the top average prices. "We run the farm as a commercial enterprise so it is better to have a consistent average than one animal that sells for a record price," he says.

Breeding for production and daily liveweight gains is a priority. "I like to breed an animal that's got style and stands up and looks at you, something with presence. It's got to have a leg in each corner and a good top line," says Andy Ryder.

The herd is bolused for growth and fertility. "The Blues are heavily muscled which can leave them short of selenium so it's important they get that supplement," says Mr Ryder. "We had tried a competitor's product but the Tracesure bolus is better overall for what we want."

Tracesure™ Cu/I scores top marks for restoring herd bloom

A farmer who produces 150 sucklers a year on a grass and forage diet says bolusing to counter trace element deficiencies has lifted the health status of the herd.

Robert Dickinson, who farms 650 acres in a severely disadvantaged area in Cumbria, with his wife, Gillian, started using Tracesure Cu/I boluses in a year when his silage quality was poor.

"I noticed that the heifers didn't have any bloom, I just felt they were lacking," he says.

"I have never been a fan of using minerals because you never know which animals are getting them so I decided to give the Tracesure boluses a go."

The results, admits Mr Dickinson, were "absolutely tremendous". "The heifers responded very quickly to the boluses and eight weeks later, when we got to calving time, the calves seemed a lot sharper and up on their feet.

"We used to get one or two stillborn calves due to iodine deficiencies. Since we started using the boluses we have been very lucky and not really had any problems so 10



Robert Dickinson says the results from bolusing with Tracesure™ have been "absolutely tremendous".

out of 10 to Tracesure, they have done us a good job."

The Dickinson's herd is predominantly Limousin-cross, Belgian Blue and Charolais. As well as calving 150 sucklers they fatten 700 cattle a year, aiming to finish at between 18 and 24 months. The beef cattle are sold mainly to independent butchers.

The beef cattle had been fattened on a concentrate-based diet but last

May, faced with an escalating feed bill, they switched to a cereal-based diet. The herd now gets barley, wheat and a protein with a mineral balancer. "We buy in 20 tonnes a week for 52 weeks of the year so price has to be a consideration," says Mr Dickinson, of High Knipe, near Shap.

The heifers are bought-in at between 12 and 26 months and everything is bolused eight weeks before calving. The heifers calve down at around three-years-old, with the first batch calving at the beginning of February. They are sold to local farmers when the calves are between 8 and 12 weeks old. Tracesure has not only restored the herd's bloom but there has been a marked improvement at calving time. "We'd had problems with calving before we used the bolus but we get very little problems now," says Mr Dickinson.

"Every now and then we miss bolusing the odd heifer and I can tell just by looking at them which animals they are."



Robert and Gillian Dickinson started using Tracesure™ Cu/I boluses in a year when silage quality was poor.