

PACE® CONNECT - IT'S SUCH A SIMPLE SYSTEM

Nestled into the heart of the midlands sits the Annegrove farm owned and run by the Rohan family. A mainly dairy farm with some tillage, this 125 cow split calving herd has been fed using Keenan diet feeders since 1989. Current production levels in the herd are 7,789kg with 555kg of solids from a total dry matter concentrate level of 775kg.

Now on their 4th mixer, Brian attended a PACE® Connect open day about 18 months ago. The level of consistency offered by mixing using the PACE® Connect system appealed to Brian and he decided to have it retrofitted to his machine. Having an older tractor in front of the diet feeder, Brian opted to get an external sound alarm fitted with it. Brian comments "I now load the wagon, go away and do a few other jobs and come back when it's just finished. I know how long I have and the alarm ensures that I'm not late."

FARM FACTS

Location	Co. Laois
No. of cows	125
Yield (kg)	7,789
Solids (kg)	555
Stocking Rate (LU/HA)	5.37
Concentrate usage (DM kg)	775

The Annegrove herd are fed a TMR with all concentrate going through the wagon. In-parlour feeders were switched off way back in 1989 and were not even a feature of the new parlour built some years ago. Operating from 23 paddocks of 2.5 acres each, Brian's stocking rate on the grazing platform runs at over 5LU/HA. A buffer diet made up of grass silage, concentrate and a second forage from the tillage base is vital to the running of the operation. Brian adjusts the amount of buffer offered based on grass growth and availability, feeding it after the morning milking before the cows go out to fresh grass. "It's such a simple system, I turn on the PACE® Connect box, adjust the number of rations to feed and it tells me how much to load" says Brian.

After 12 months using the system, Brian has also seen massive gains in fertility. "Achieving a 75% first service to conception left me amazed to be honest; I'd have laughed at anybody who told me it would improve so much, but I've seen it happen here. On top of that for the last 2 calving seasons, we have averaged a calf per cow. We have been using sexed semen and generally there is a lower first service to conception rate but not with us."

Brian finished summing up his thoughts on PACE® Connect & inTouch by simply saying "PACE® Connect should be compulsory on every diet feeder, for consistency of the mix alone."



Photograph by Roger Jones

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