

Reliability, back-up and service

Cattle farmers explain how the new Keenan Mech Fiber range is delivering extra benefits

FIELD TEST

Keenan specialises in manufacturing diet feeders and delivering results on farm.

Three Cumbrian dairy farmers give their opinions on the success of their Keenan diet feeders.

PACE (Performance Acceleration & Control Enhancement) ensures the right ingredients in the TMR are weighed and mixed in the correct order to produce an identical ration for all cows.

Just plug into your computer and upload all the data – as these Cumbrian farmers have discovered to their benefit...

Only one mix per day needed now

Andrew Grindley farms at Seymour Farms, near Aspatria, with his uncle Edward and grandmother Janet.

The farm, which has been in the family for many years, covers 650 acres and has dairy and beef cattle as well as sheep.

They previously had a Keenan 170 diet feeder which they liked very much, but they found that, as the herd increased to 200 dairy cows with followers and 250 beef cattle with followers, they needed a bigger Keenan mixer for faster feeding. So they purchased a Keenan 400 Mech Fiber with PACE fitted.

The Keenan 400 has a 10-tonne capacity. The family have been very impressed with the Keenan 400.

Andrew said: "We have found more consistency in the ration with the PACE system. With the extra capacity we save fuel and time, and now need only one mix per day for the dairy cattle and one mix per day for the beef cattle."

"The cows have become higher yielders and the PACE system keeps a tight eye on any changes."

"We buffer feed through the summer which has also proved to be worthwhile, with no change in the cows' condition and yields staying consistent."

Accurate daily feeding

Sitting not far from the mighty Blencathra is Whitbarrow Farm, a family holding of 420 acres that Graham Harris and his father run with the help of one full-time worker.

The farm is all dairy with 250 cattle plus followers. All replacements are reared on farm.

The family have used Keenan feeders here for quite some time.

"We initially had a Keenan 100 feeder, then progressed on to a Keenan 140," said Graham.



'Many benefits': Left, Chris Wilson at Skirwith Hall Farm; centre, Whitbarrow's Keenan 340 mech fiber mixer; and, right, Peter Woodhouse



Andrew Grindley: Farms at Seymour Farms, near Aspatria, with his uncle Edward and grandmother Janet

"As the herd has increased, we now have a Keenan 340 Mech Fiber 16 cubic yard mixer wagon with the PACE system. The Keenan mixer is used 365 days a year, so it is vitally important is reliable."

"We like the simplicity of use and the consistency in the TMR."

"We have a zero grazing policy. The cows are inside for milking with robots, so in the summer we buffer feed concentrate and grass."

"The yields maintain a consistency and we have a more content cow. Another major benefit with the Keenan 340 is being able to chop straw for the dry cows; we have noticed the dry cow ration has helped with the cows calving down well."

PACE helps the nutritionist identify problems before they occur, as well as giving a day-to-day check on feed efficiency, feed costs and margins, plus yield per cow.

With zero grazing it stops the

variation from day to day and from field to field. The Keenan mixes the grass with the concentrate so that all the cows benefit from the same ration.

More than 20 years and never missed a feed

Skirwith Hall Farm is a family farm run by brothers Chris and Len Wilson. The 700 acres are part arable, and the brothers manage a herd of 300 dairy cows and followers plus bull beef.

They purchased their first Keenan feeder more than 20 years ago, and today they have a Keenan 170 feeder retro fitted with PACE. They changed to the Keenan 170 about three years ago when the herd increased in numbers.

"One of the plus points for Keenan is the low hp required to drive the mixer, adding fuel saving to its many benefits," said Chris.

Chris and Len feed a TMR year-round which they find gives a consistency in milk quality and yields. The Keenan 170 mixes the dry cow ration very well too.

"We like the PACE system: whoever is feeding, the mix is the same and we can all monitor this. There are many other excellent statistics that help us manage our dairy herd to its optimum performance."

■ Peter Woodhouse and his company, which specialises in maintaining Keenan feeders, come highly recommended by all the farmers on this page.

"Our company specialises in the maintenance of Keenan diet feeders," he said. "We provide a 24-hour 365-day service for Keenan users throughout the north of England. David's company offers a maintenance contract for the machines. Our policy is one of preventative maintenance, if there's a hint of anything amiss we will replace it."

"The joy of Keenan diet feeders is that there are no expensive gear boxes and the simple yet effective four-chain, oil-immersed drive is so easy to work on. There is nothing on this machine we cannot repair on the farm."

"It involves a lot of cold work on winter evenings when the machine is not in use, but it is necessary to ensure the machines are ready for the first feed of the day."

Peter runs his business out of premises in Millom.

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