Fresh pasture contains 3-5% fat – therefore, fat is not limiting in pasture-based diets.

Adding bypass fats to the diet (3%) can provide additional energy without detrimental effects; however, fat supplements are generally expensive and the gains in milk revenue are rarely profitable.

DairyNZ trials indicate no improvement in BCS or economical milk solids gains when bypass fats were fed in early lactation.

Bypass fats are unpalatable and can reduce DMI. If energy is not limiting, there are no reproductive benefits of adding fat to a pasture-based diet.

As with any other supplement, it is important to look at the gain in milk solids and milk revenue in return for the cost of the fat supplement. Fat supplements are generally expensive and the gains in milk revenue are rarely profitable.

A trial at DairyNZ supplemented grazing cows with 500 g/day of HyProfat (a bypass fat supplement similar to HyFat) from 4 weeks pre-calving to 5 weeks post-calving.

- There was a small numerical increase in milk solids production from 1.7 to 1.8 kg MS/cow per day during the 5 weeks post-calving.
- At $7/kg MS, this 0.1 kg MS increase would return $0.70/cow per day, compared with a minimum cost of $0.98/cow per day to purchase the feed (this does not include feeding out costs or wastage).
- There was no effect of feeding the fat supplement on BCS.

References:


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This resource is designed to provide general guidance on particular topics in a timely manner. This DairyNZ information is prepared with due care and based on research to date.