

LC Agricultural Science – Key Definitions

Metabolisable
energy

REVISE
WISE

The energy from feed that an animal can convert into live weight gain (LWG), milk and wool and is measured as MU/kg.

Maintenance diet

REVISE
WISE

The amount of feed that allows an animal to maintain a constant body weight.

Production diet

REVISE
WISE

The extra amount of feed required to produce 1kg of LWG, 1 litre of milk, 1 kg of wool or to produce a calf or a lamb.

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Conformation

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WISE

The shape of an animal and the distribution of weight and muscle around its body.

Colostrum

REVISE
WISE

The first milk secreted by mammals after giving birth. It is high in nutrients and antibodies and is essential for the survival of the new born animal.

Gilt

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WISE

A female pig that has not had a litter.

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Terminal sire

REVISE
WISE

A ram that is used to produce offspring with high growth rates, good conformation and good carcass quality for slaughter.

Flushing

REVISE
WISE

The process by which the ewes are moved from a low plane of nutrition to a high plane of nutrition prior to mating.

Steaming up

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The process of increasing the amount of concentrates being fed to sheep in late gestation in order to prevent twin lamb disease, ensure a healthy lamb and promote good milk production.

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Store period

REVISE
WISE

A period of restricted feeding that occurs during winter housing when there is a change of feed from a high plane of nutrition to a low plane of nutrition. The results is a decrease in a live weight gain (LWG) of the animal.

Compensatory growth

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WISE

The increase in growth rate that occurs following a period of restricted feeding.

Calving interval

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WISE

The time that has elapsed between successive calvings.

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Heading dates



The heading dates of grass species is the time when the ear emerges on the grass plant. Grass species are categorised as early, intermediate and late heading.

Heading out



This is when half of the grass plants have produced seed heads.

Ensiling



This is the process of storing grass or another crop in a silo, clamp or pit for preservation as silage.

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Herbicide

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WISE

A chemical that kills plants or inhibits their growth.

Fungicide

REVISE
WISE

A chemical that kills or inhibits the growth of fungi.

Pesticide

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WISE

A chemical used to kill pests (particularly insects and rodents).

Cut dotted horizontal lines. Fold vertical lines.

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Catch crops

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WISE

Fast-growing crops grown between two main crops when land would otherwise lie idle.

Humus

REVISE
WISE

The dark-coloured, decomposed plant and animal matter found in soil. It is rich in nutrients and contributes to soil structure.

Soil texture

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Measure of the proportion of different sizes of mineral particles (sand, silt, clay) that are found in a sample of soil.

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Loam soil



A soil that contains equal amounts of sand, silt and clay.

Flocculation



The clustering together of soil particles to create larger structure called floccules.

Hygroscopic water (absorbed water)



Water that forms a thin film around a soil particle and is held on the surface of the particle by force of attraction. It cannot be removed from the soil and is not available to plants.