



Green bedding

SLURRY handling specialist Bauer will premiere its equipment for extracting soft cubicle bedding from slurry fibre.

At the heart of the system is a new de-watering machine developed by FAN Separator GmbH, a subsidiary of the Bauer Group, which can achieve

higher dry matter than with more conventional screw separators.

The new system is complementary to the FAN Bedding Recovery Unit (BRU) Bauer supplies.

While the BRU uses its integral drying system to produce a soft and easy to handle fibrous material of

at least 40%DM, material from the Green Bedding separator is typically up to 36%DM and has to be used daily.

At around £200,000 the BRU system is for large herds and the material it produces can be stored, but the Green Bedding system at around



£40,000 is viable for smaller units.

►► Stand SI 420

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Green bedding using undigested forage fibres separated from slurry has been a popular bedding option for farmers in the US for up to 15 years, but the concept has taken longer to become established in Europe and the UK. "Previously we had cheaper bedding available for livestock than most other countries so there wasn't the need to diversify," explained Bauer UK sales manager Adrian Tindall. "Now costs of conventional materials are increasing, farmers are keen to look at alternatives."

However, Adrian said that while cost of bedding had been an issue for most of those who changed over to using green bedding in the UK it was not the primary reason for making the move; "The main reason was cow health and comfort," he explained. "We took a group of interested farmers to see established systems operating in Germany, and sales immediately followed. There is a high demand now for installations in the UK but better comfort and hygiene for the stock remains the primary reason for the investment in at least 20 per cent of cases."

Richard Threlfell of W Threlfell farms at Bowscar, Cumbria, said he had made the move over to green bedding for his 300 pedigree Holstein dairy cattle having seen a sample of green bedding on display at a show and impressed, had asked where he could buy it. "We have had cattle on the farm for at least three generations and we

know what cattle need and like," he said. "Having seen the bedding, we researched the benefits and decided to invest in a Bauer 'Green Bedding' separator. It was easily installed in just a few days and while it does everything we had been told it would, there are many other benefits besides the production of bedding. Slurry management and spreading is easier, there are fewer storage issues now, and far less need for stirring. When we apply the slurry it disperses better and 90 per cent is immediately available rather than 40 per cent previously; there is nothing to break down. And while it wasn't our primary reason for the installation, we are spending half the amount we were on sawdust.

"The electricity cost is minimal and there is hardly any maintenance needed," he added. "We opted for automatic lubrication, the screens rarely need cleaning and it has been virtually maintenance free. It took just a week to bed in and after that it proved very efficient and reliable. That is essential for us, because like our mixer, it runs at night-time on cheap rate electricity and we don't want to be having to sort out problems during the night.

"Changes in the slurry mean



we sometimes have to adjust the extrusion counter-weights that control the compression and the dry matter content, but that is done rarely, and we are constantly achieving in excess of 36 per cent dry matter," he said.

Richard said spreading the bedding after use is carried out using the same equipment as used previously for sawdust, and that because the bedding is so readily available, there is no need to be sparing with it; "We use a lot more now than before, just because we can," he said. The pens are unbelievably clean now, and hygiene has improved; our cell counts are approximately 30 per cent lower than before, and it's no coincidence- they dropped the first week we moved over to the green bedding."

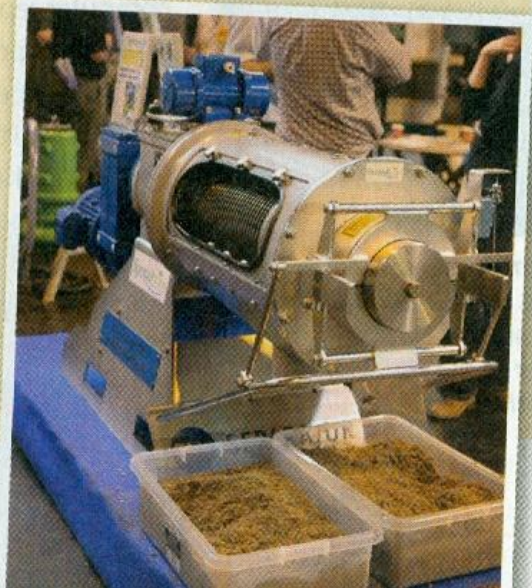
Adrian (left) is pictured with Richard and the Bauer 'Green Bedding' separator.

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Spreadwise was showing its modified slurry separator which produces green bedding at up to 36 per cent dry matter. "Running for one hour it will produce enough bedding for 100 cows," explained Dick Hewitt, who was on the stand providing advice at the show. "The cost of other bedding, straw and sand, has increased and sand causes high wear rates on anything mechanical. Cows love the green bedding, it's very comfortable and it stays clean; factors just as important as the cost savings."

Spreadwise is an official importer for Bauer, and supplies and installs systems throughout the UK. Dick said sales of its separator so far have all been to existing dairies, and he explained that cost of the green bedding separator is approximately £30,000 with typical installation costs adding about £10,000. "It has a very quick payback period, and we have had considerable interest at the show," he said.



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Right: Bauer's Green Bedding Separator was launched at the Dairy Event last year, but is now available for sale. Its auger, driven by a 7.5kW gear motor, and using a 1mm screen to separate liquid from fibrous solids, is designed to extract the maximum possible moisture, resulting in bedding of 35-36 per cent dry matter said to be ideal for optimal cow comfort. Bauer area sales manager for UK, Scandinavia and the Middle East and Far East, Klaus Ferk said the separator will appeal to dairy farms with more than 80-head of livestock, and has the potential to save a considerable amount of money on bedding costs compared to using sawdust or similar material.



Price Correction For Bauer Green Bedding System



The correct price for the Bauer Green Bedding system pictured here is £40,000 not £200,000 as reported in the January issue of Farm Contractor. Viable for smaller dairy units, the high pressure screw FAN separator produces high dry matter levels in fibrous material separated from slurry. The material produced is ideal for bedding cubicles and the company says, offers a considerable saving over traditional methods and also reduces the amount of slurry.

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