New for 2015, Academy Vets would like to introduce a service available to progressive dairy farm clients – **Rumen Health Visits**

- Nutrition in dairy cows should be straightforward, however it rarely is.
- Maximising the output from feeds is key to profit, and in a climate of falling milk prices this is all the more important.
- Feeding cows is essentially feeding their rumens and the bugs they contain.
- Practical on farm assessment with a hands on approach will give you immediate feedback on nutritional performance in your herd.
- The key to getting the most out of feeding is, you guessed it, **Optimising Rumen Health**

### What’s Included

- Six fresh cows and six peak lactation cows are selected and various individual tests performed
  - On farm blood ketone measurement for **ENERGY**
  - Body condition scoring
  - Rumen Fill assessment
  - Rumen fluid sample and assessment including pH
  - Faecal consistency scoring
  - Dung sieving to assess digestion

**Ration assessment on farm with practical nutrition and feeding advice**

Simple calculations will be used to ensure the diet is appropriate and balanced.

Reasons for poor rumen health will be identified (including SARA, see right) and practical steps for improvement suggested.

The visit is designed to take up to three hours and timing depends on what kind of ration is fed

- For herds feeding cake in the parlour samples are taken 2 hours after milking
- For herds feeding a true TMR (no cake in parlour) samples are taken 4-6 hours after delivery of the mix

### What is SARA?

Subacute ruminal acidosis (SARA) is a term that often comes up when talking about nutrition and can get the blame for anything from loose dung to poor fertility.

If the rumen pH (acid) is low for long periods during the day it can kill off the rumen bugs and cause milk drop, weight loss, ketosis and displaced stomachs.

It can be associated with feeding too much concentrate, however lack of effective fibre in the diet is just as important.

A Rumen Health Visit will diagnose if SARA is likely to be an issue in your herd, and identify ways to help stop it.

**If you are interested in Rumen Health Visits on your farm then please contact the surgery and ask for Ian McDonald**