

Liming plan

Why spread lime?



1. Release up to 70kg of soil nitrogen (N)/ha/year for free. This will allow chemical N use to be reduced and consequently reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Some 65% of soils on drystock farms and 50% of soils on dairy farms don't have the right soil pH.
3. Increasing soil pH will allow you to grow 10-15% more grass (five to eight bales of grass silage).
4. The economic return is high. For every €1 you spend on lime on a drystock farm, you get back €5. For every €1 you spend on lime on a dairy farm, you get back €7.



Apply lime based on soil test report results.

The facts and advice about lime



How much?

- Test soils on a regular basis (every three to five years) to determine lime requirements.
- Only apply lime based on a recent soil test report.
- Do not exceed 7.5t/ha in a single application.

When?

- Prepare a farm liming plan. This will identify where lime is needed, and when and at what rate it should be applied.
- Lime can be spread all year round. Having a lime plan in place will open up opportunities to get it applied over the year when conditions are suitable and land is available.

How often?

- Apply lime often as per the soil test report.
- On very acidic soils, apply 50% now and the remainder in two years' time.
- Apply lime to 20% of the farm annually.

Which lime to use?

- Calcium ground limestone is the most common: it's fast acting (less than three months) and offers rapid pH adjustment.
- Magnesium (dolomitic) ground limestone is available: this is somewhat slower to react but has a higher liming value.
- Granulated limes: finer limes (less than 0.1mm particle size) and very reactive – apply as maintenance product when soil pH is >6.0.

Lime and high-molybdenum soils

- Soils with high-molybdenum (Mo) status may give rise to copper deficiency in grazing animals.
- Increasing soil pH to >6.2 increases Mo availability.
- To reduce elevated Mo levels, maintain a somewhat lower soil pH of 6.0-6.2.

Lime and slurry/urea

The type of N in slurry and urea is ammoniacal N and prone to loss if applied to freshly limed soils. To avoid N loss the following is recommended:

- leave seven days between applying urea or slurry and applying lime;
- leave three months between applying lime and following with urea or slurry application; and,
- no interval required between liming and NBPT urea.

Avoid applying lime to species-rich grasslands to maintain swards' species biodiversity.

