



# Teagasc Soil Fertility Report

## 2024

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The information in this publication is based on soil analysis carried out by Teagasc for its clients.

Further Information available at  
<http://www.teagasc.ie/soil/analysis/results.asp>

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## Introduction

Having reported on soil analysis results since the 1950's, playing a key role in the research and development of soil testing and nutrient advice for Irish soils, Teagasc delivers a soil testing facility for clients as part of its fertiliser planning (NMP Online) service to give advice on the efficient use of nutrients for crop production. Getting the soil basics right, such as optimising soil pH and applying phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) in a balanced programme, is a key part of all economically and environmentally sustainable production systems. Soil testing is a crucial and low cost technology that enables the strategic application of fertilisers and organic amendments to crops. Applying the right source of nutrients, at the right rate and the right time to the right place prevents nutrient loss to water, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and protects soil biodiversity.

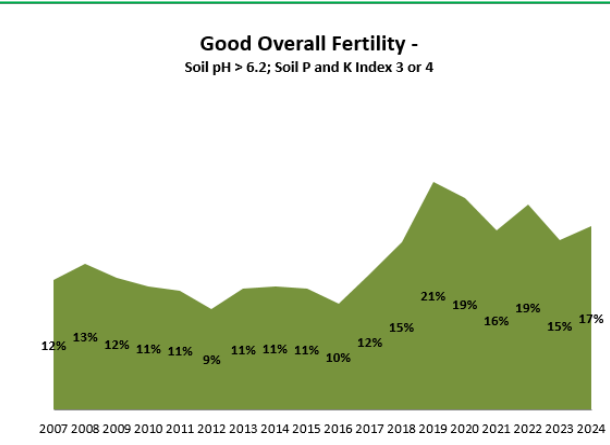
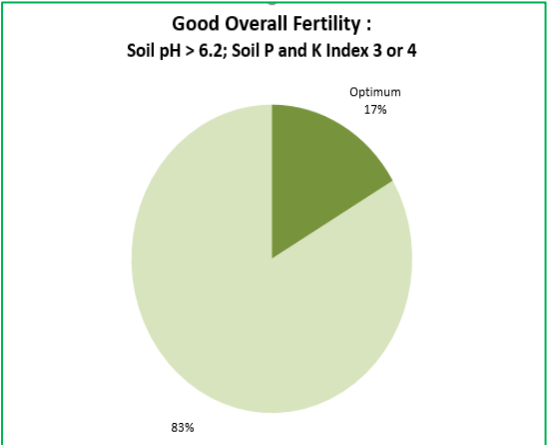
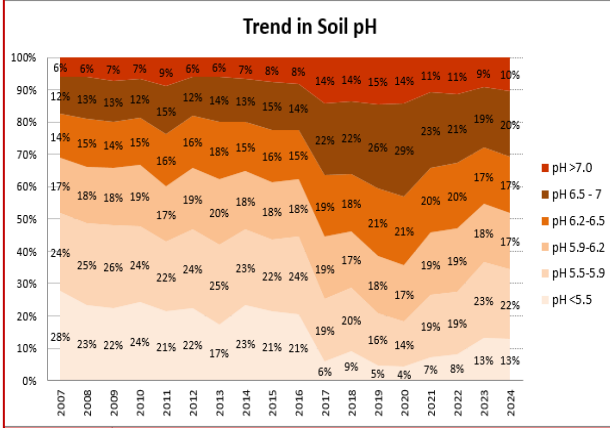
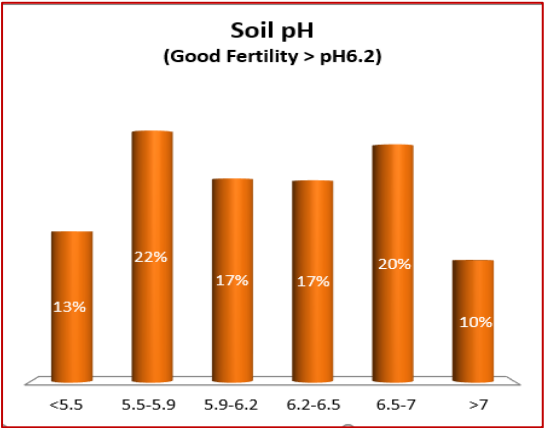
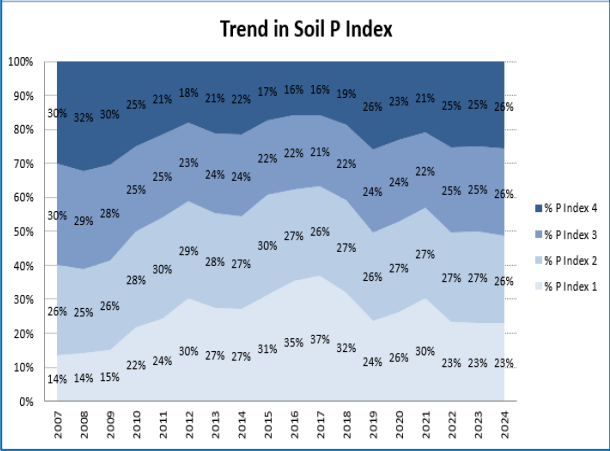
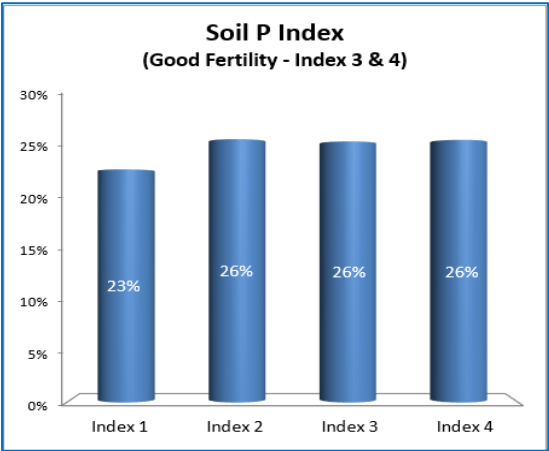
Teagasc maintain a database of soil test results analysed annually to monitor soil fertility trends over time for the major soil nutrients (pH, P & K). The soil samples are not matched for each farm from year to year but, due to the large number, it provides a very solid insight as to how soil fertility trends are changing over a 4 to 5 year period which reflects the soil sampling interval on these farms. In addition the soil database is quite large with anything from 30,000 to 75,000 soil samples analysed annually. Some care should be taken in interpretation of data as the reasons for soil sampling can vary from year to year, for example, a significant requirement for sampling in relation to agri-environment schemes can impact on trends.

Soil fertility trends are graphically presented on a national and county by county basis and provide an insight into soil fertility status and changes over time for each county. This information tends to be quite reflective of the county soil types and farming enterprises practiced. This is very useful for farmers, advisors and policy makers on guiding lime and fertiliser advice for systems of production to meet requirements. It may also be useful to guide more targeted national policy changes to meet future water and air quality targets.

The publication consists of a number of graphs showing trends in all soil samples analysed since 2007. The data is further broken down on an enterprise basis for example dairy, drystock and tillage. The information is also presented on a county by county basis for each enterprise. Each report contains four pieces of information. The current percentage of soils at each of the 4 indexes for P and K and soil fertility trends since 2007 to 2024 (see examples below). Soil pH trends are presented in a similar format with five pH categories. The final graphic shows the percentage of soils with optimum soil pH, P & K.



Examples of Soil Fertility Data



## National soil fertility trends in recent years

A steady increase in lime, P and K fertiliser use from 2012 has resulted in some significant improvements in optimum soil fertility. In 2012, 36,294 passed through the Teagasc soil analysis service only 41% of which had optimum P fertility. 47% were optimum for K and 34% optimum for pH. Just 9% of soil samples analysed had optimum fertility across P, K and pH altogether. In 2024, 69,218 samples were analysed, 52% of which were optimum for P, 57% optimum for K and 47% optimum for pH. 17% of the samples tested showed optimum fertility. This improvement has come in spite of considerable challenges facing the agricultural sector in recent years.

Recent increases in lime usage saw 2022 generate the highest consumption of lime in Ireland since the turn of the century. However, poor weather conditions and associated trafficability issues in 2023 saw lime usage drop by nearly 27% and early indications are, for similar reasons, tonnage used in 2024 will likely be the same as last year or drop again. Optimising and maintaining soil pH is the first step in improving the efficiency of all other applied nutrients and the consistent application of lime to intensively managed acid mineral soils is a key in requirement to building soil resilience and maintaining soil fertility. Due to the rise in fertiliser prices in 2022, the national consumption of nutrient P and K in the form of chemical fertiliser both dropped by over 33% between 2021 and 2023. While K usage in 2024 rose 7.5% on the previous year, P has dropped a further 6.6%. Controlling fertiliser costs, while critical to farm profitability, should not be at the expense of mining valuable soil fertility levels. The challenge now and over the next number of years will be to continue to build our soil fertility on productive agricultural land.

More recently in 2023 Teagasc recorded a 300% increase in the number of soil samples submitted for analysis from the drystock sector, raising the total analysed sample count from ~38,000 in 2022 to ~75,000 in 2023. This increase was largely in response to requirements for ACRES (Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme) and the introduction of new regulations removing any phosphorus allowance from parcels without a valid soil report. The impact was a 4% drop nationally in the number of samples at overall optimum fertility from 19% in 2022 to 15% in 2023. It is important to remember however, that the target nutrient indices on marginal and biodiverse rich swards are not necessarily the same as for highly productive systems with high offtakes. Decisions related to nutrient management need to be taken with the output requirements and ecological value of the habitat mind.

## Summary of national soil fertility data for 2024

In 2024, Teagasc analysed a total 69,471 soil samples, of which 92% represented grassland samples. For dairy farms, 21,093 soil samples were analysed, a decrease of 21% on the number analysed in 2023. 42,944 soil samples from drystock farms were analysed, an increase of 5% on the previous year. On tillage farms 4,747 soil samples were taken, which represents 31% decrease compared to 2023.

The following is a summary of the main changes for soil pH, P and K in 2024.

## National Highlights

- The overall number of soil samples analysed dropped by 7.5% on 2023 with the decrease coming from the dairy and tillage sample set
- A slight improvement in soil fertility on 2023 with soils at optimum fertility increasing to 17% (+2%)
- Soil pH saw an improvement with 47% of soils analysed testing with >pH 6.2 (+2%)
- Soil P levels at Index 1 & 2 decreased to 49% (-1%)
- Soil K levels remain similar with a slight decrease (-1%) in soils at K index 1 & 2

## Enterprise Highlights

### Dairy

- 24% of soils have optimum pH, P & K (5% increase)
- 61% of soils with a soil pH >6.2 (9% increase)
- 37% of soils at P index 1 & 2 (9% decrease)
- 38% of soils at K Index 1 & 2 (6% decrease)

### Drystock

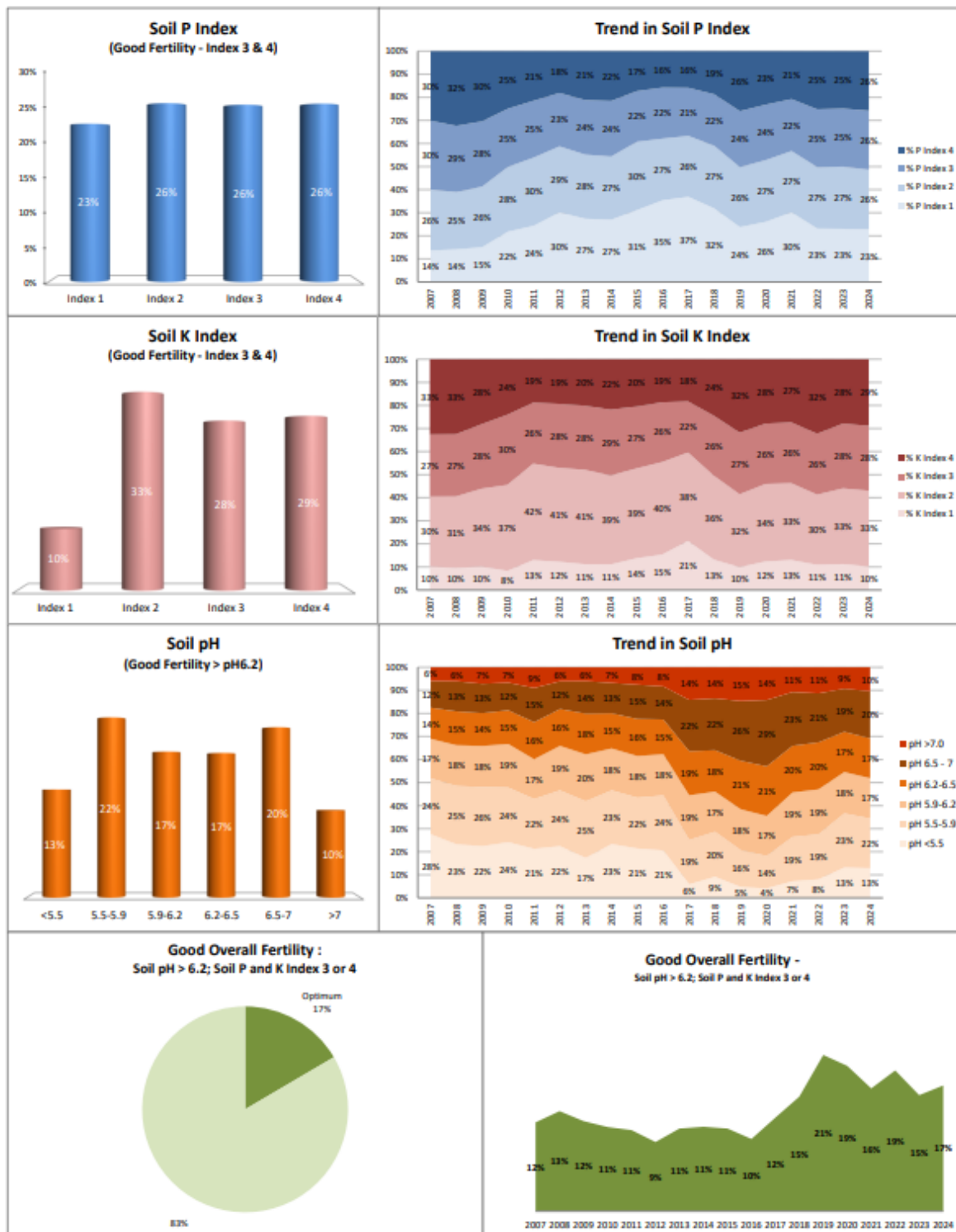
- 11% of soils have optimum pH, P & K (1% decrease)
- 38% of soils with a soil pH >6.2 (2% increase)
- 53% of soils at P index 1 & 2 (1% increase)
- 47% of soils at K Index 1 & 2 (2% increase)

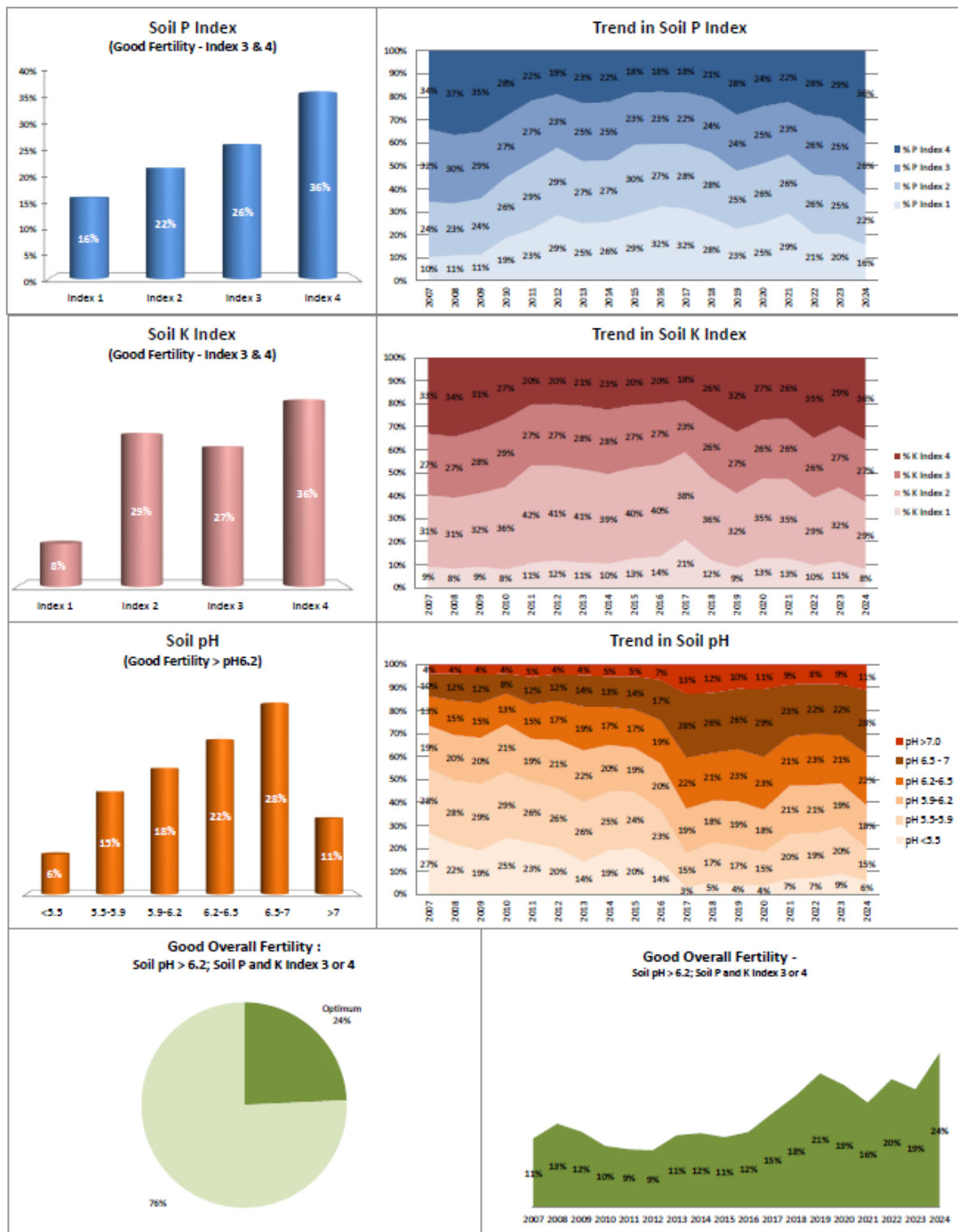
### Tillage

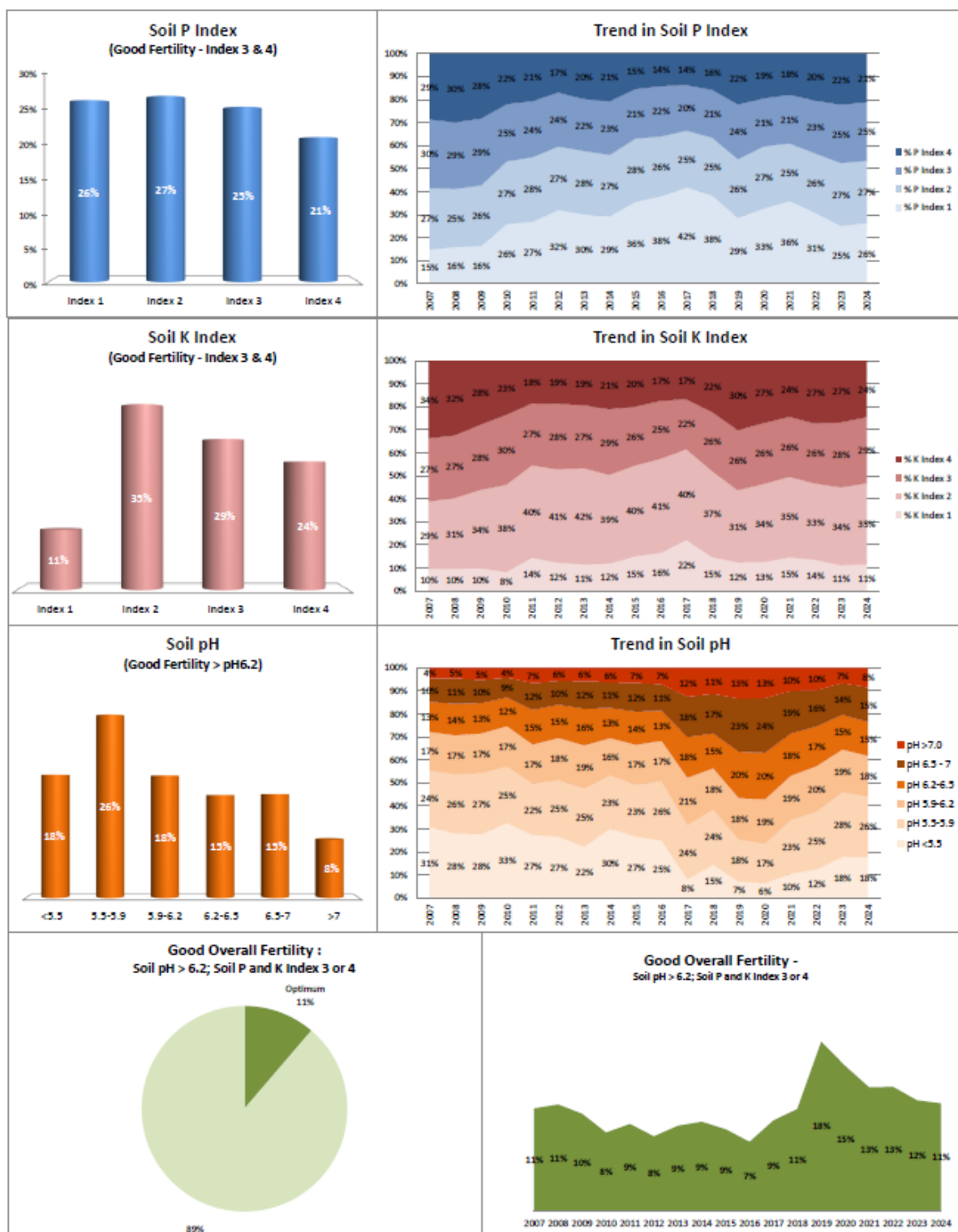
- 20% of soils have optimum pH, P & K (no change)
- 62% of soils with a soil pH >6.5 (1% increase)
- 55% of soils at P index 1 & 2 (1% increase)
- 33% of soils at K Index 1 & 2 (6% decrease)

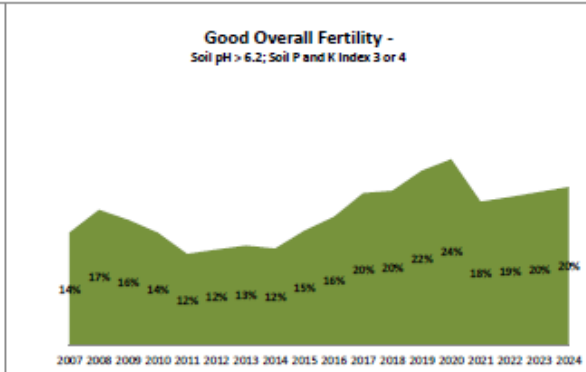
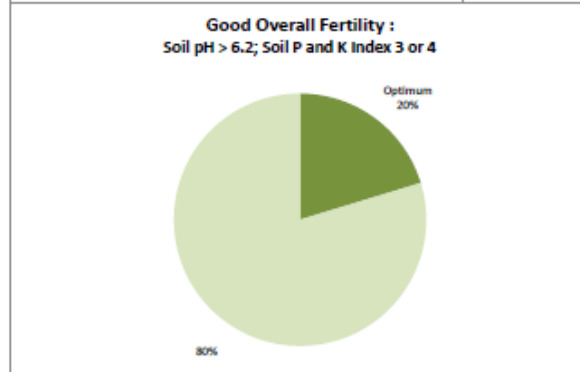
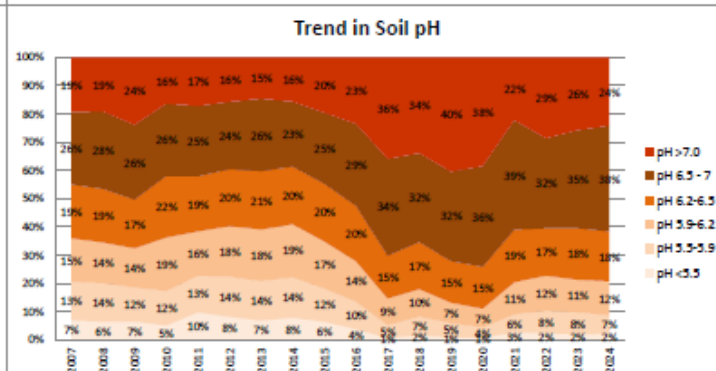
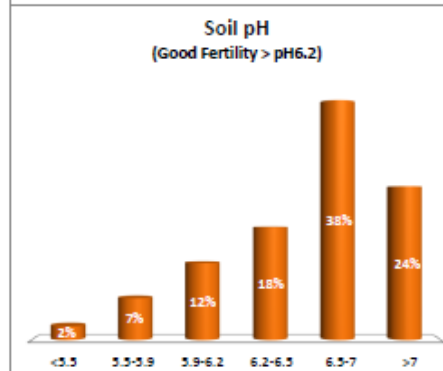
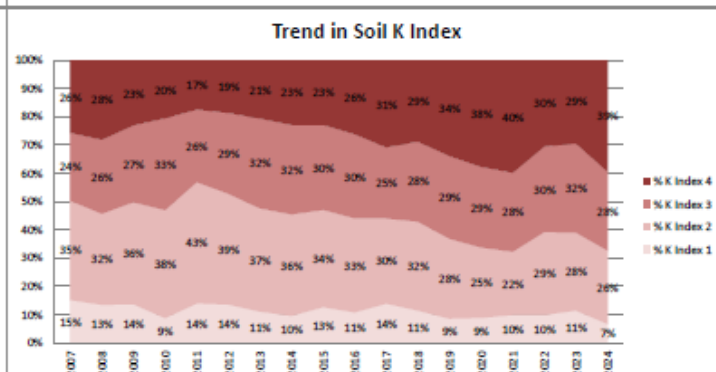
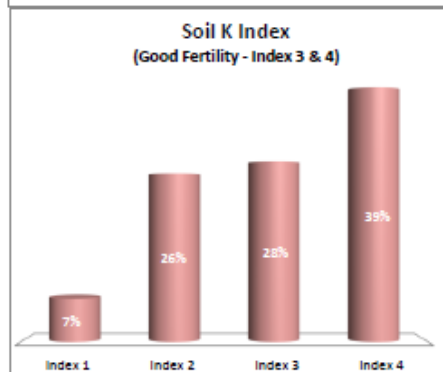
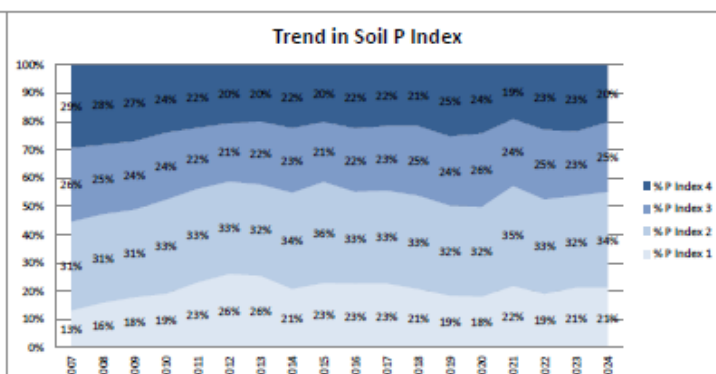
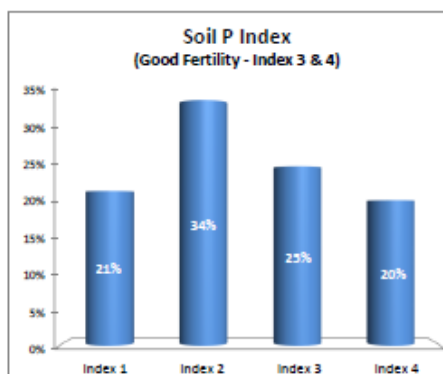
While on a national level, soil fertility trends changed little in 2024, on an enterprise level the data showed some noticeable differences. Samples taken from the dairy sector, in particular, showed substantial improvements on the results recorded in 2023 which was consistent across all parameters tested. This may be a consequence of improved liming, P build up allowances or the enhanced knowledge transfer through mandatory derogation training requirements to this sector over the last number of years now showing dividends. It is particularly encouraging following a period of very high fertiliser prices which this sector appears to have overcome without forfeiting innate soil fertility. According to these results, over one third of the 2024 dairy sample set is in index 4 for both P and K. These high index soils will naturally supply the fertility needs of the crop for the year ahead, reducing costs and providing the opportunity to strategically divert organic and chemical P, K applications to the low index soils building whole farm fertility. It will be interesting to see if the trends continues into the future.

Another noticeable trend is the improvement of the soil potassium levels under tillage systems, and again the increase was largely in the index 4 category. Continued analysis will indicate if this response is a consequence of the introduction of the straw incorporation measure in 2021.









# County based soil fertility trends 2024

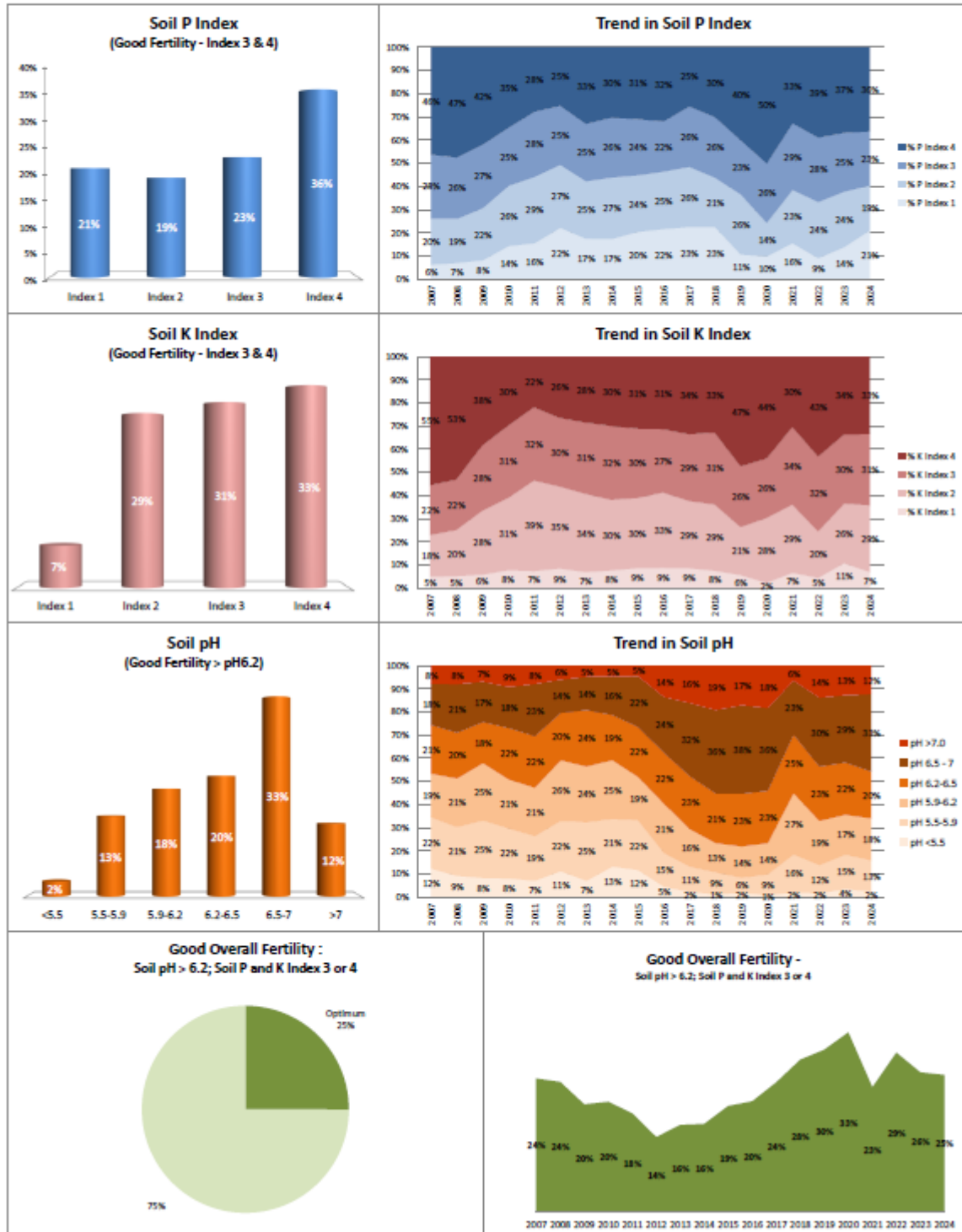
## Carlow soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



### Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Carlow
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	326

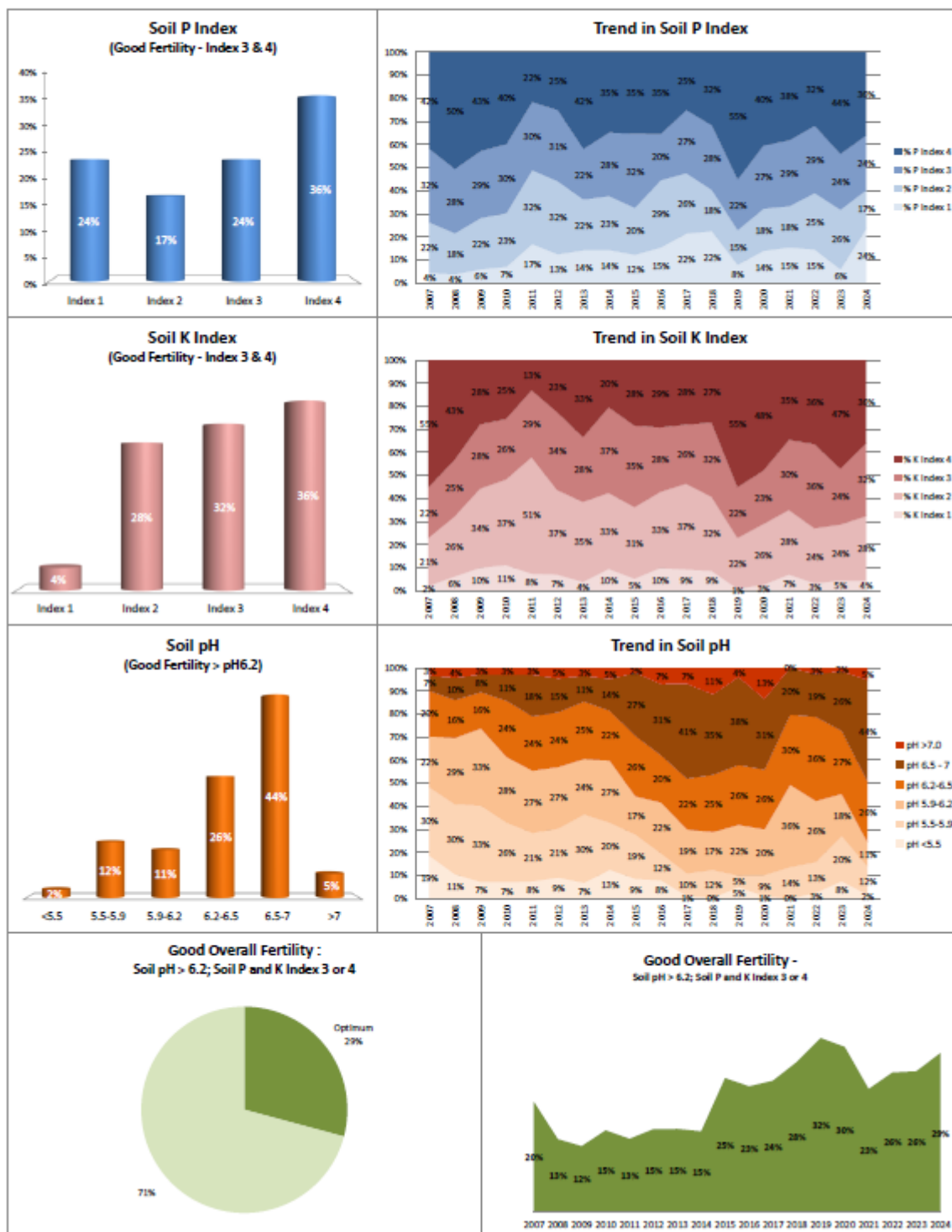






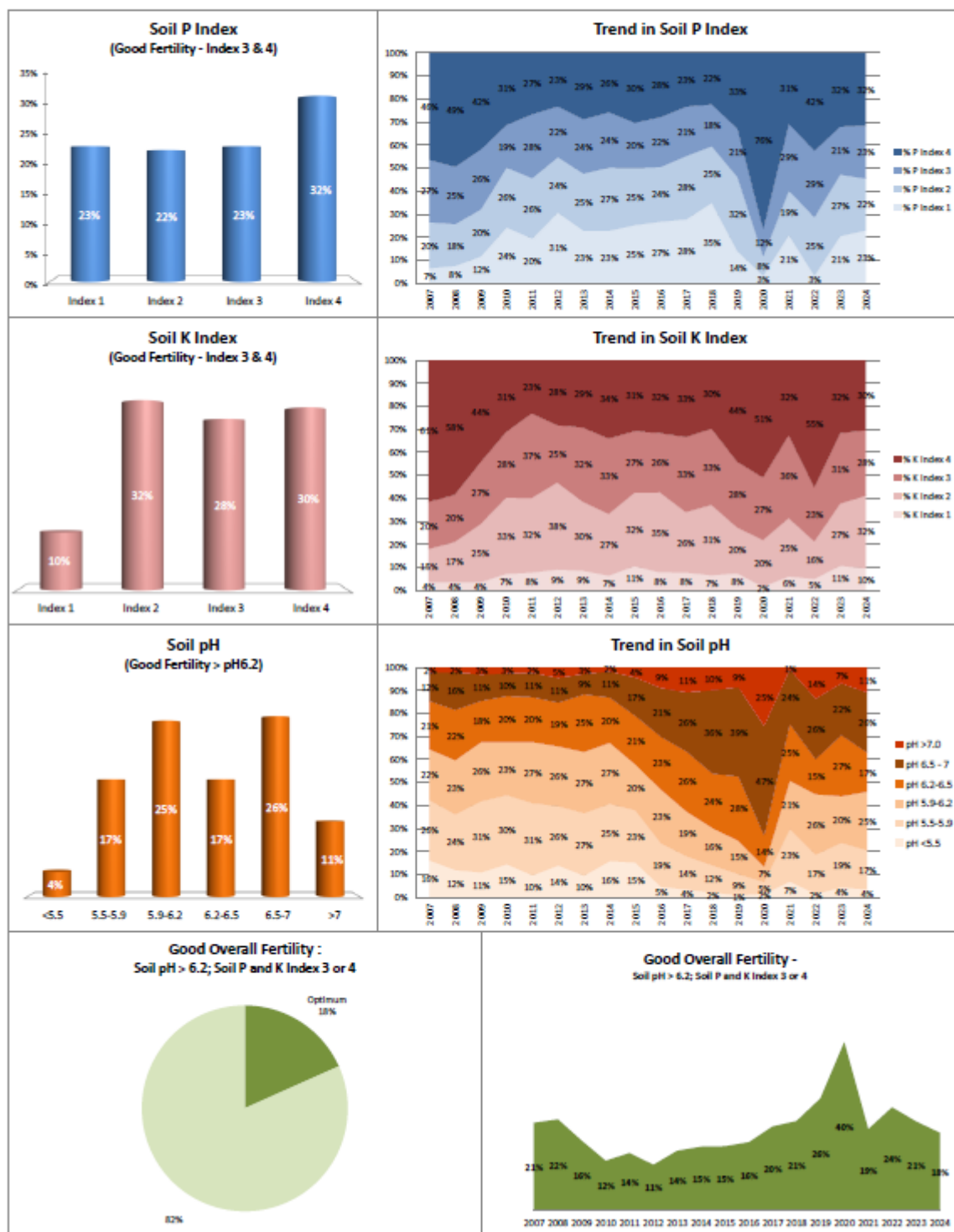
## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Carlow
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	114



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Carlow
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	165



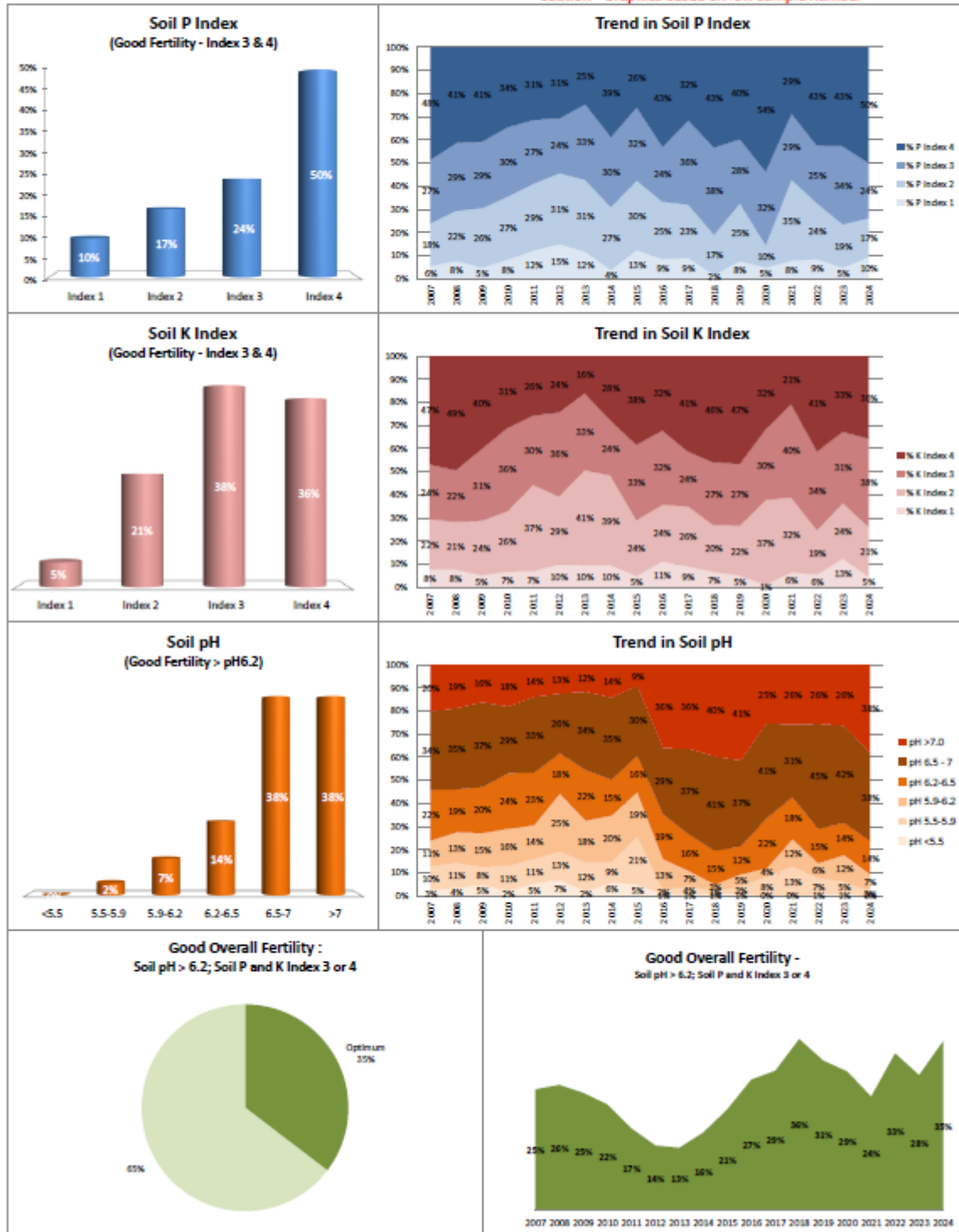
## Tillage



### Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Carlow
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	42

Caution - Graphics based on low sample number



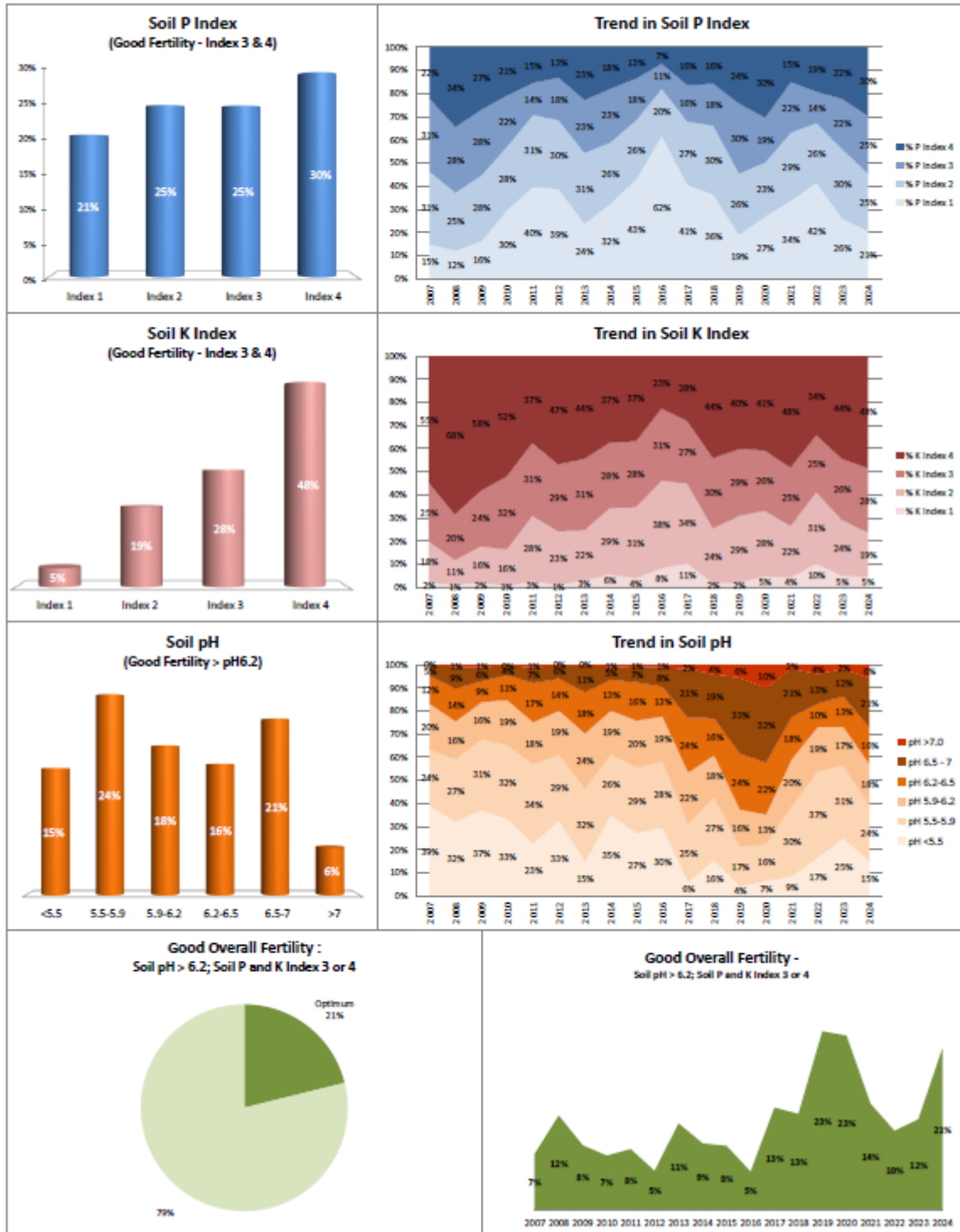
# Cavan soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Cavan
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	1,115

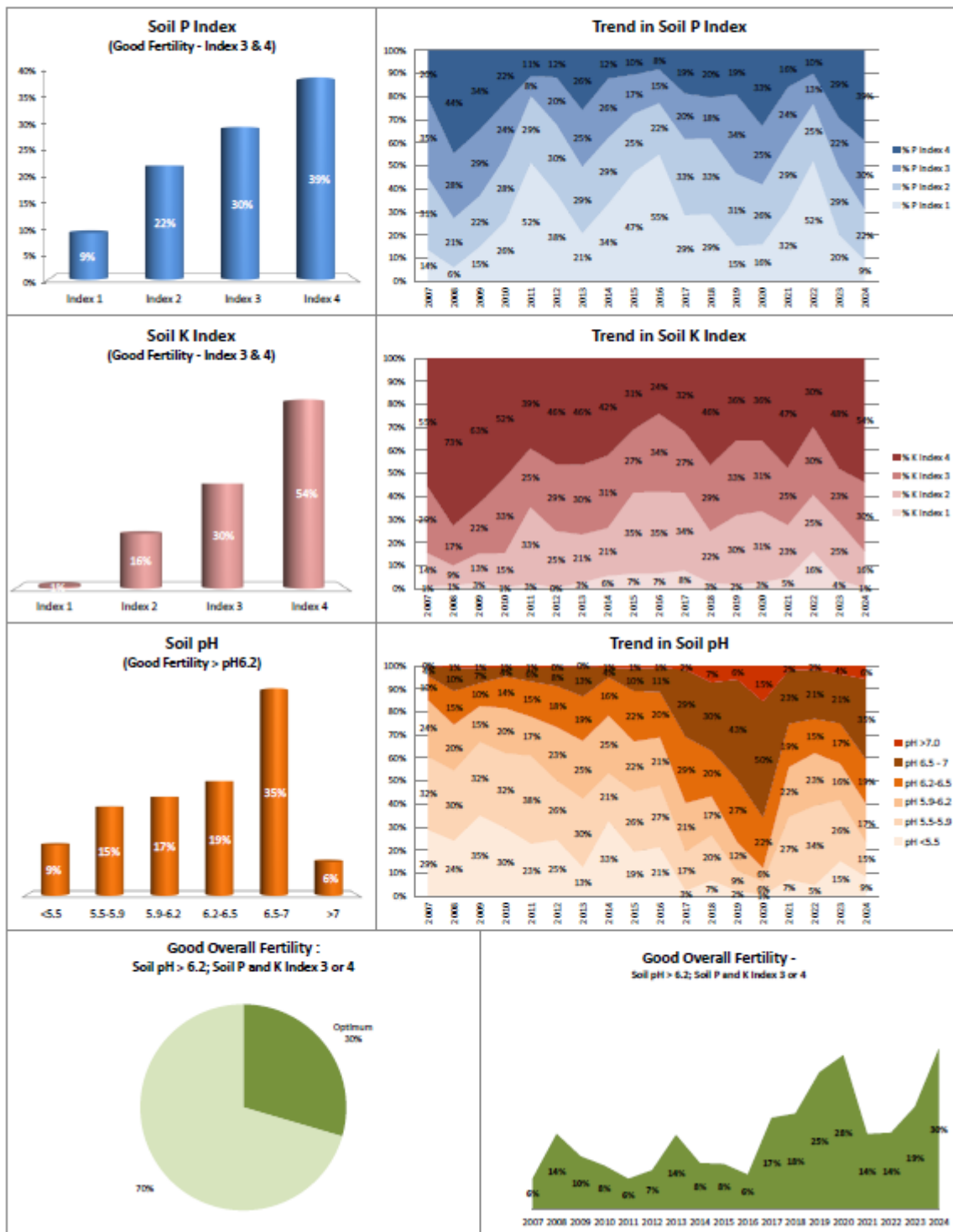


# Dairy

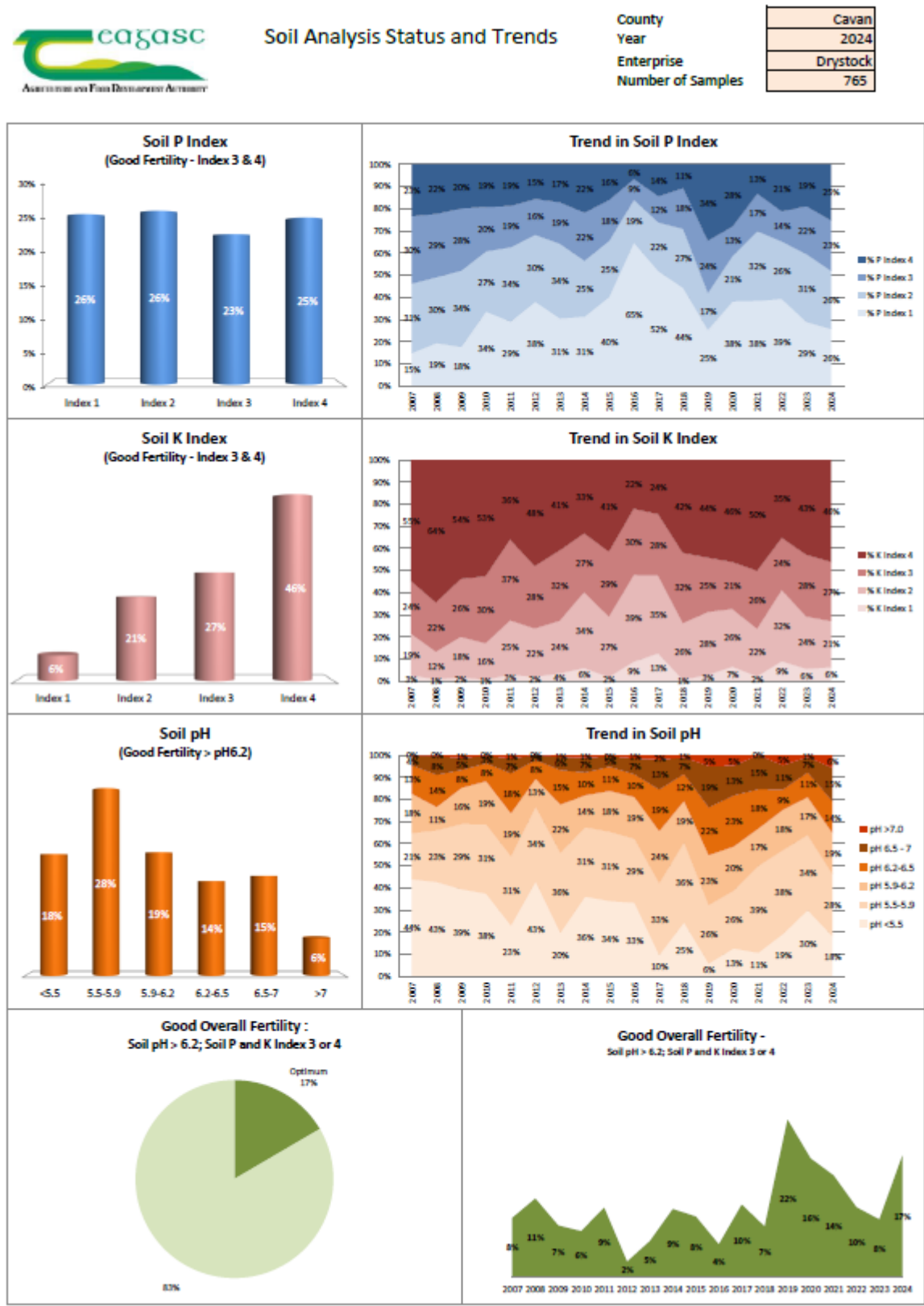


## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Cavan
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	348



Drystock



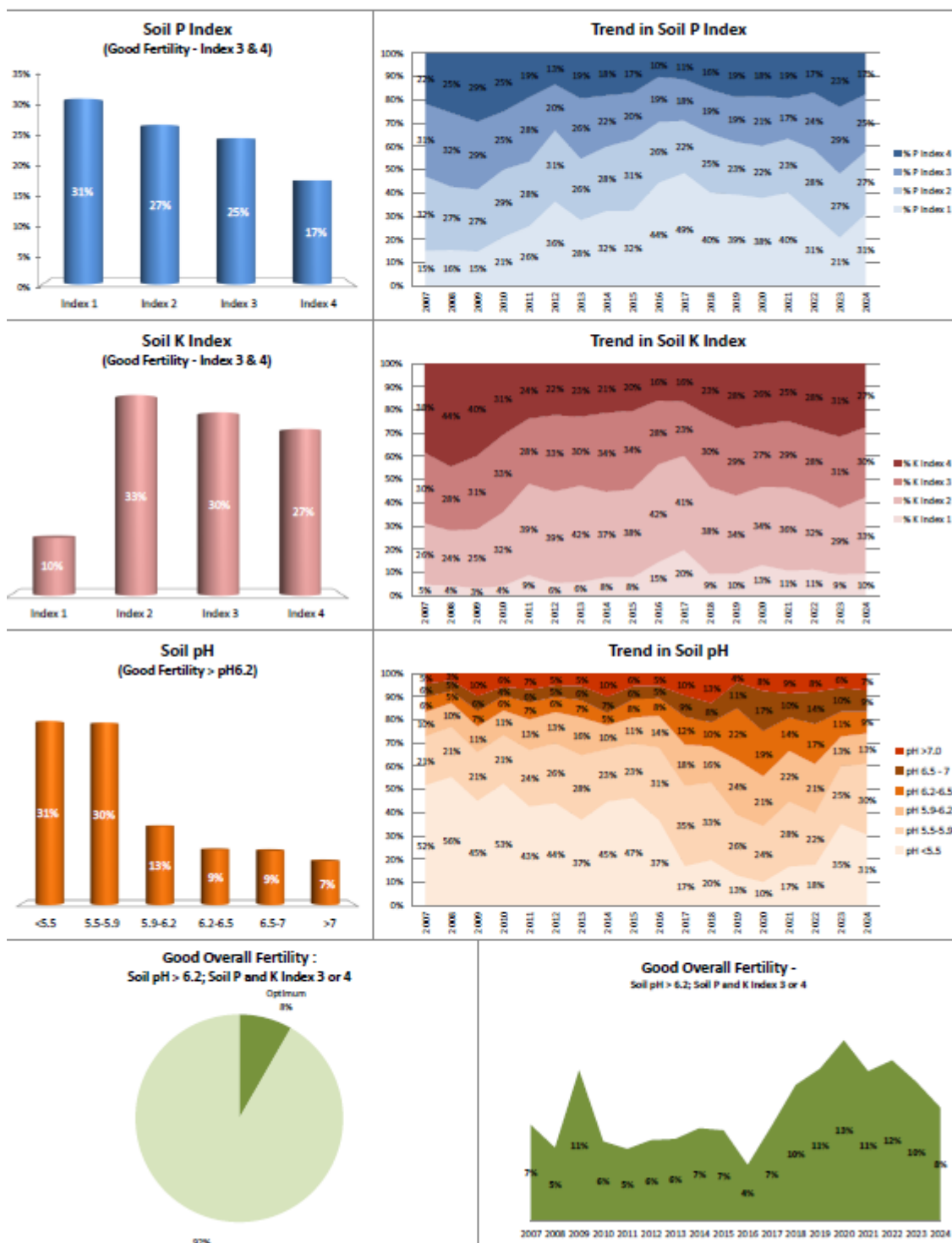
# Clare soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Clare
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	5,903



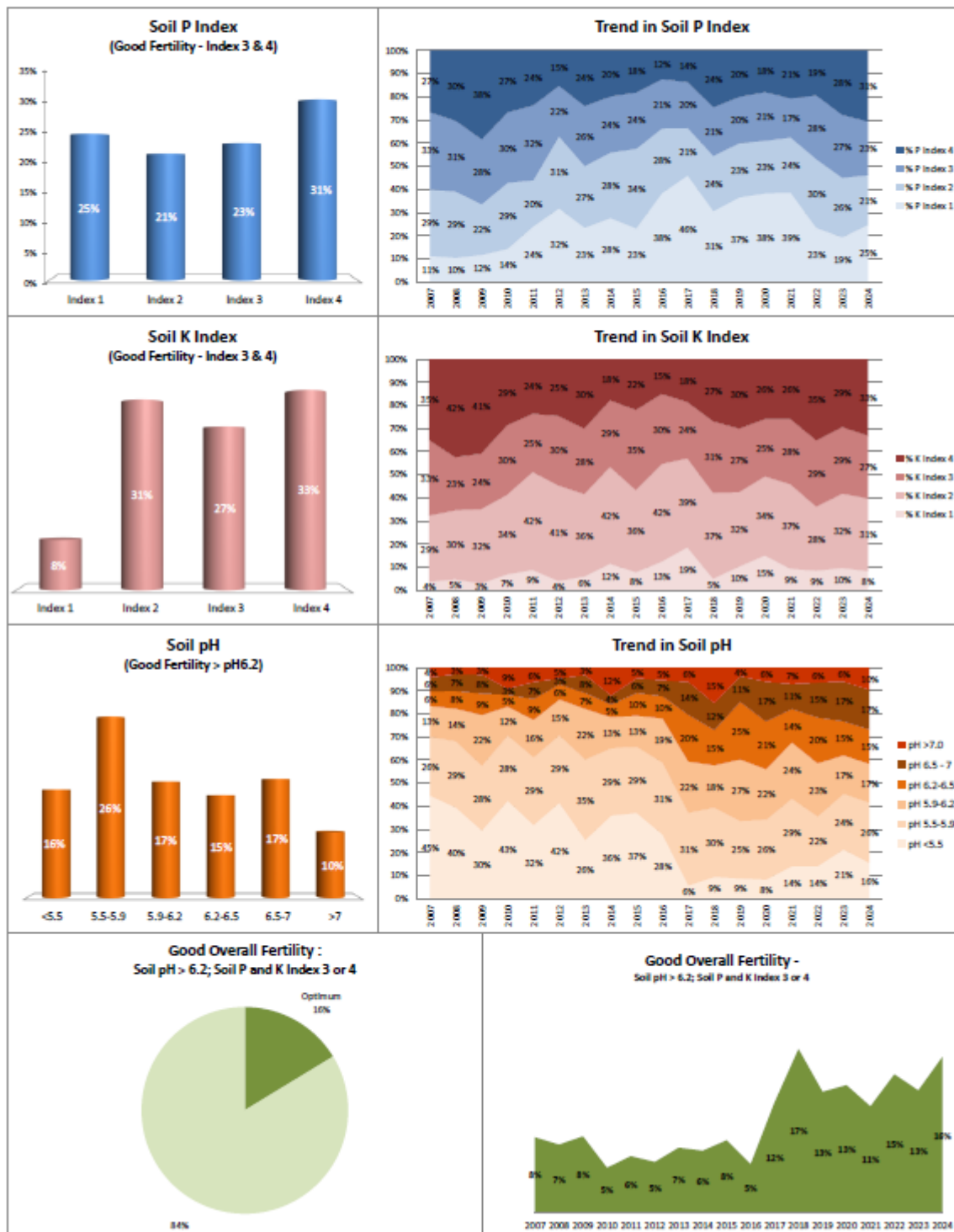


# Dairy



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Clare
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	775



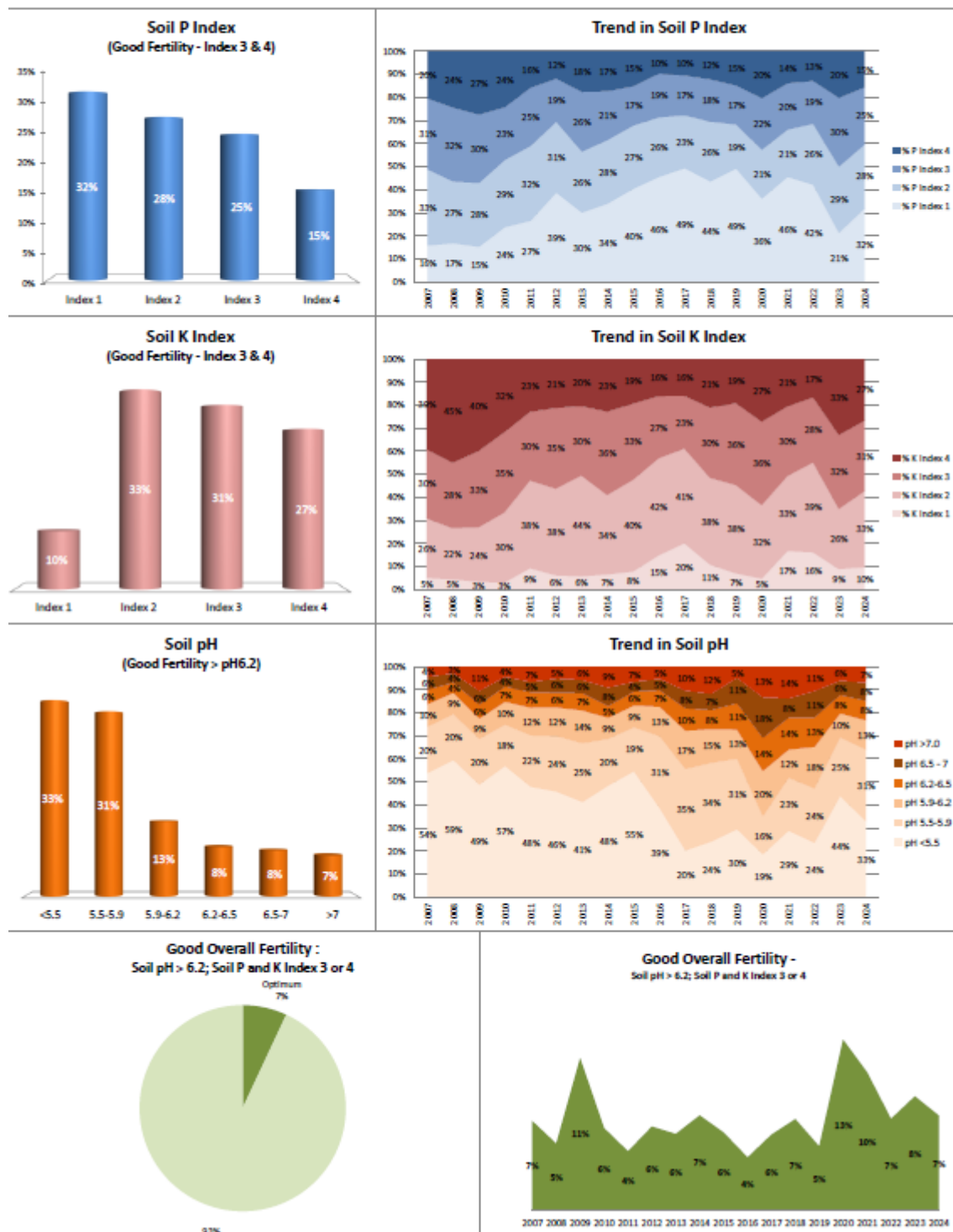


Drystock



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Clare
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	5,110



Tillage

Insufficient data set available

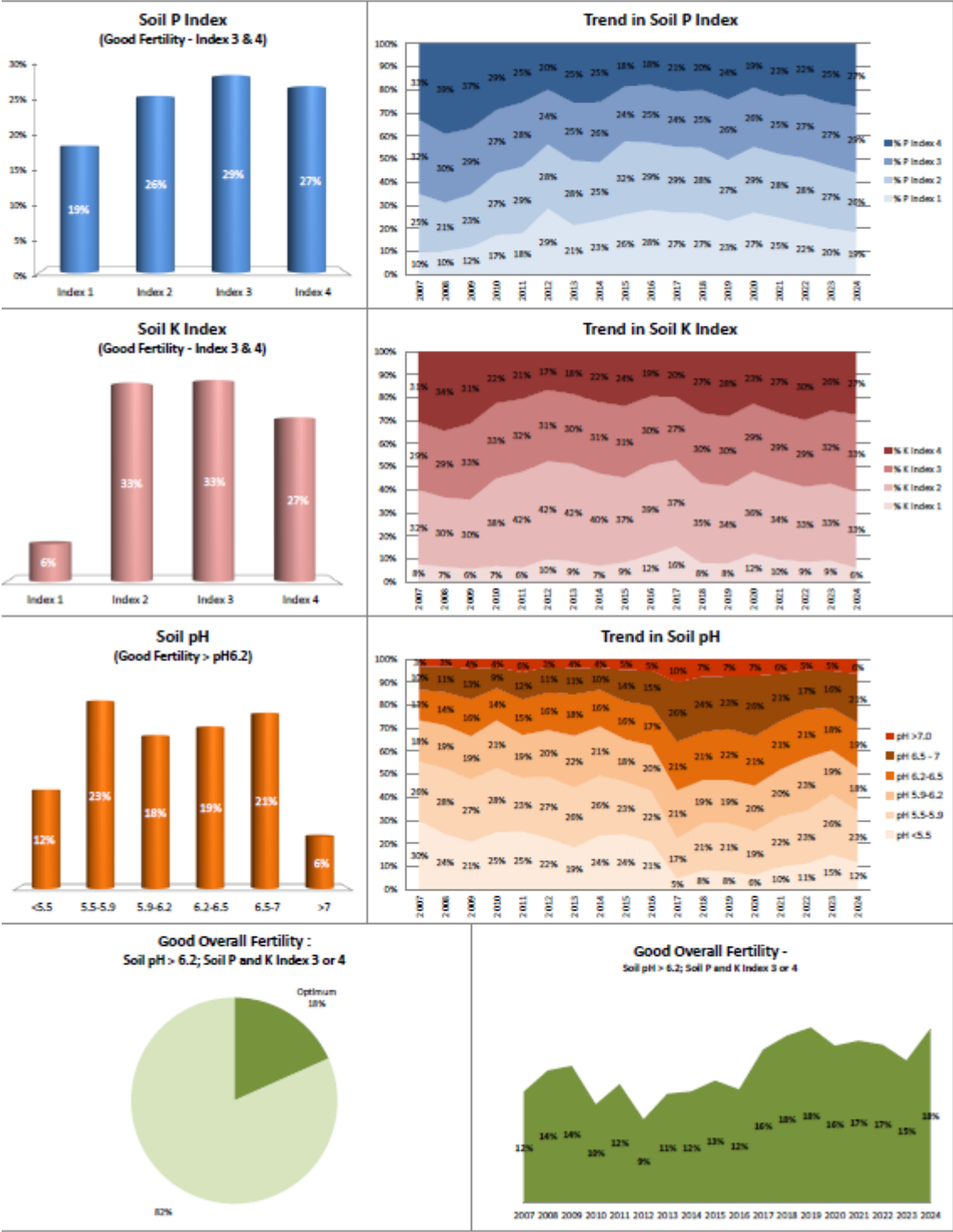
Cork soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Cork
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	7,507



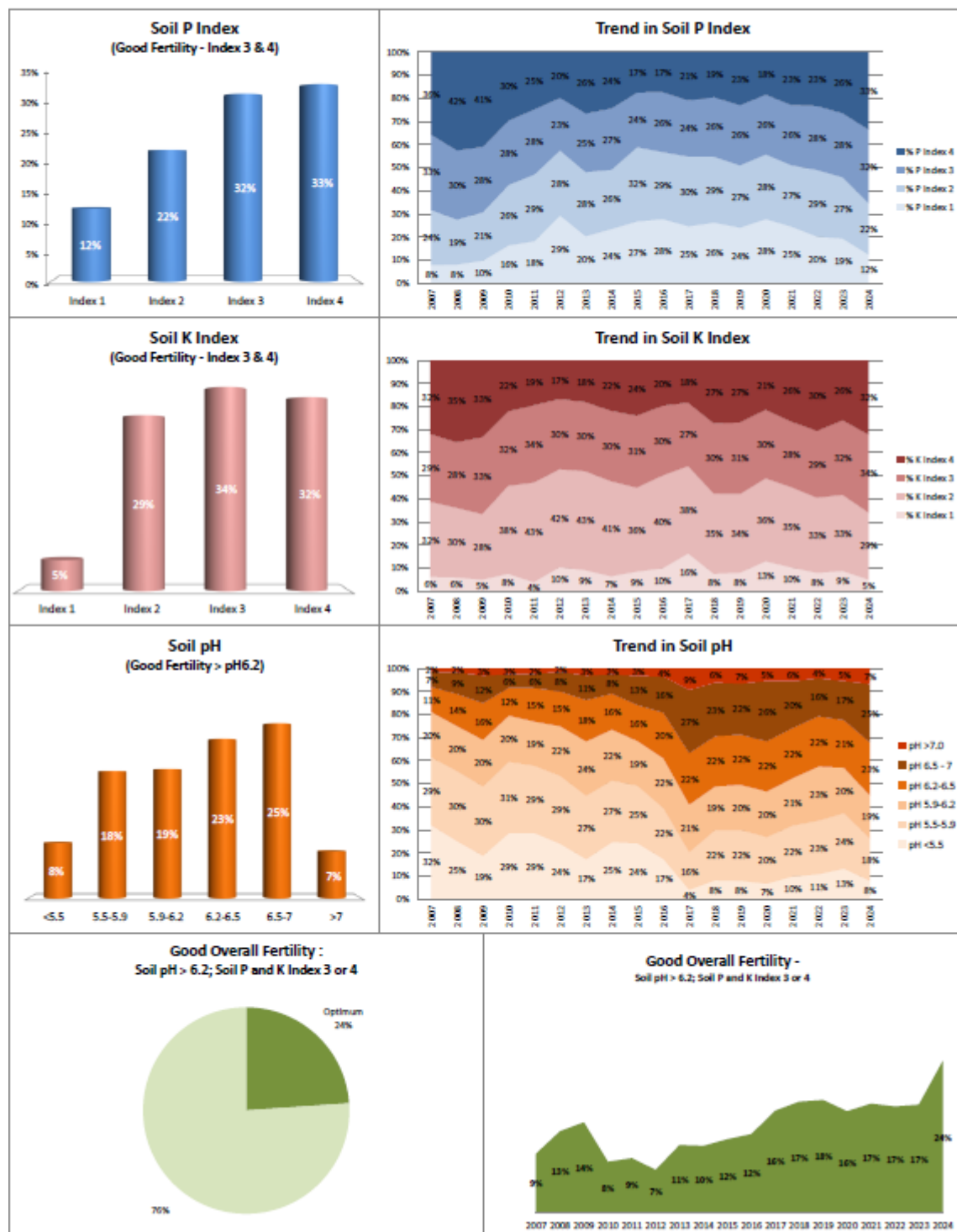
# Dairy



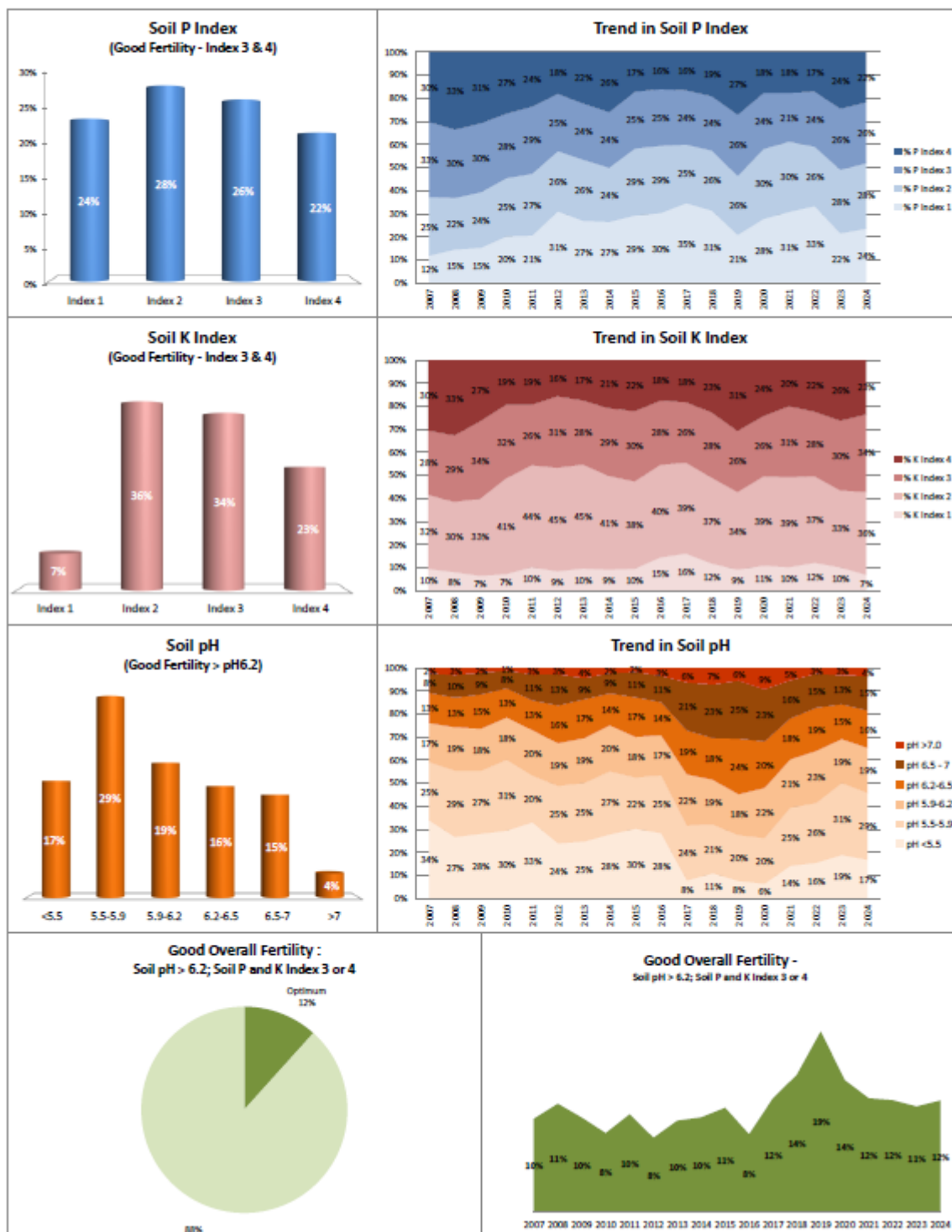
## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County  
Year  
Enterprise  
Number of Samples

County	Cork
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	3,445



County	Cork
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	3,467

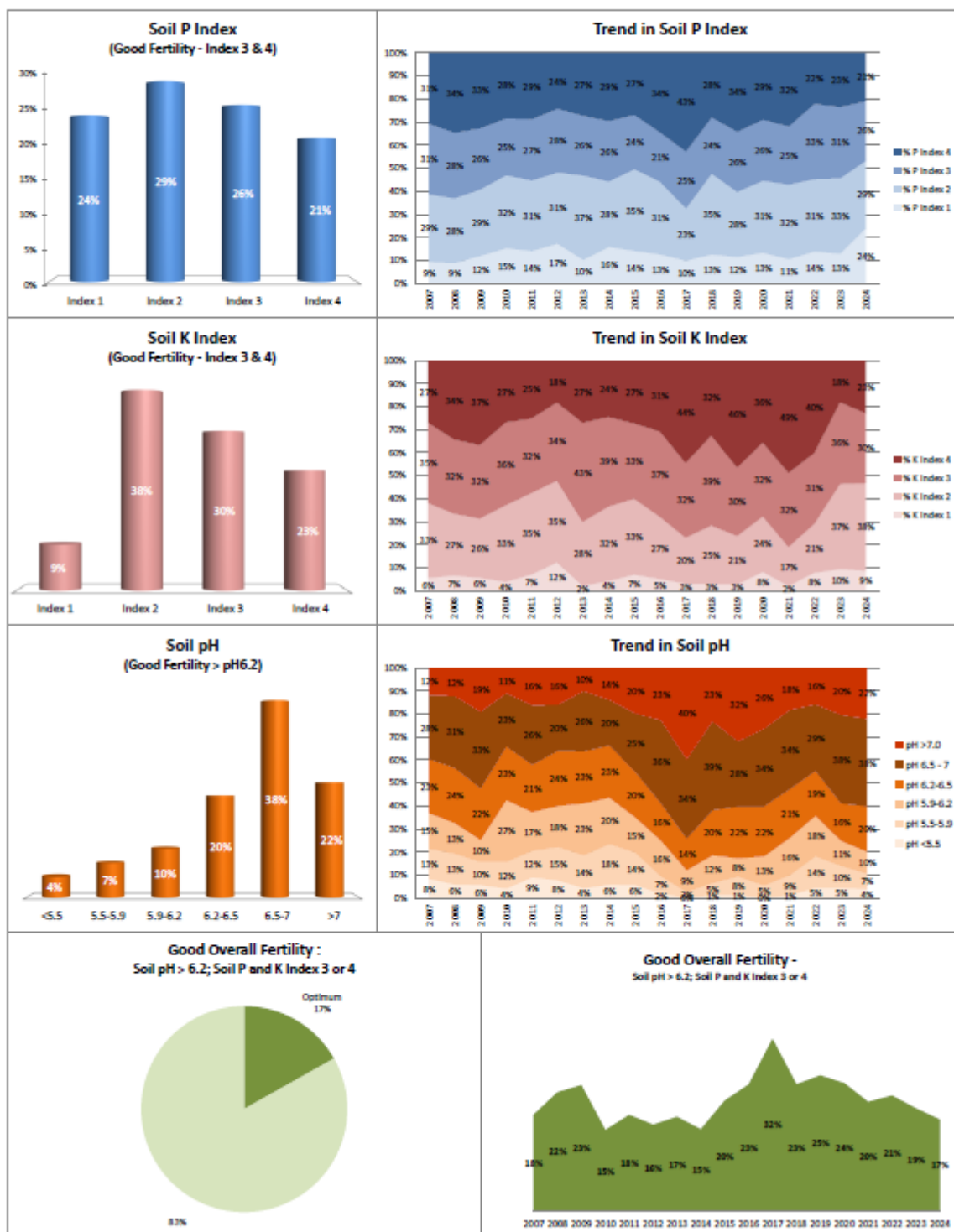


# Tillage



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Cork
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	521



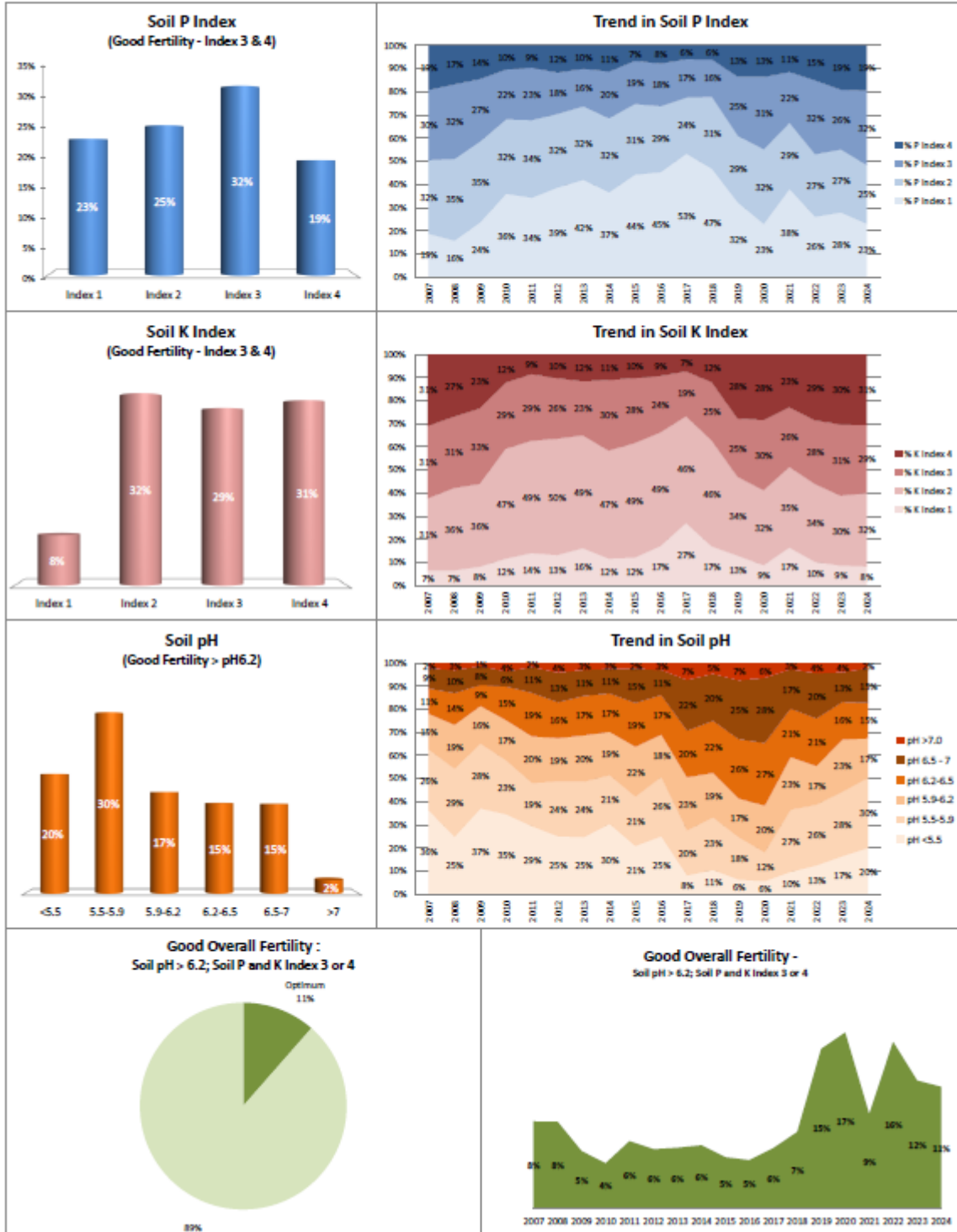
# Donegal soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Donegal
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	1,730



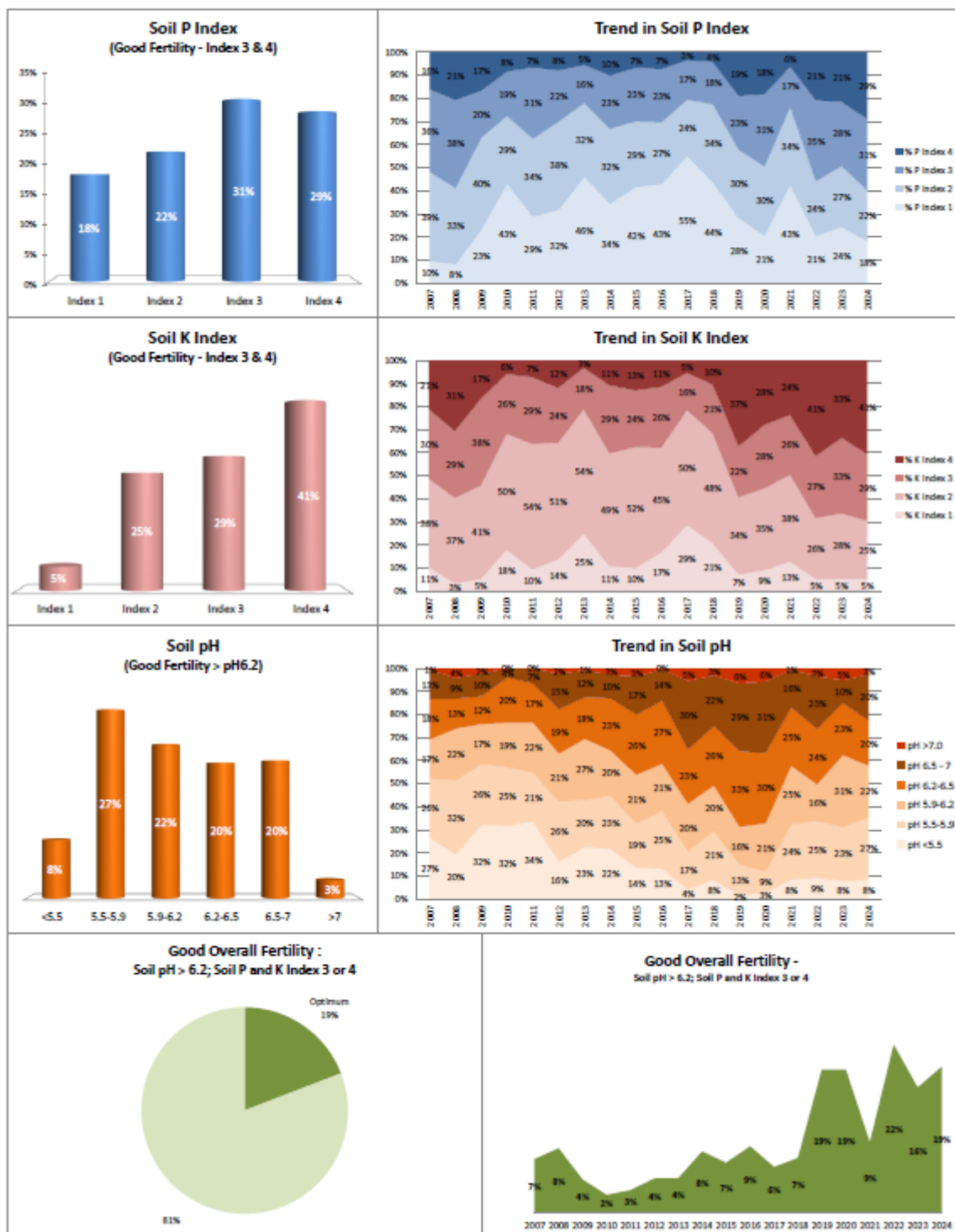
# Dairy



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County  
Year  
Enterprise  
Number of Samples

Donegal
2024
Dairy
340

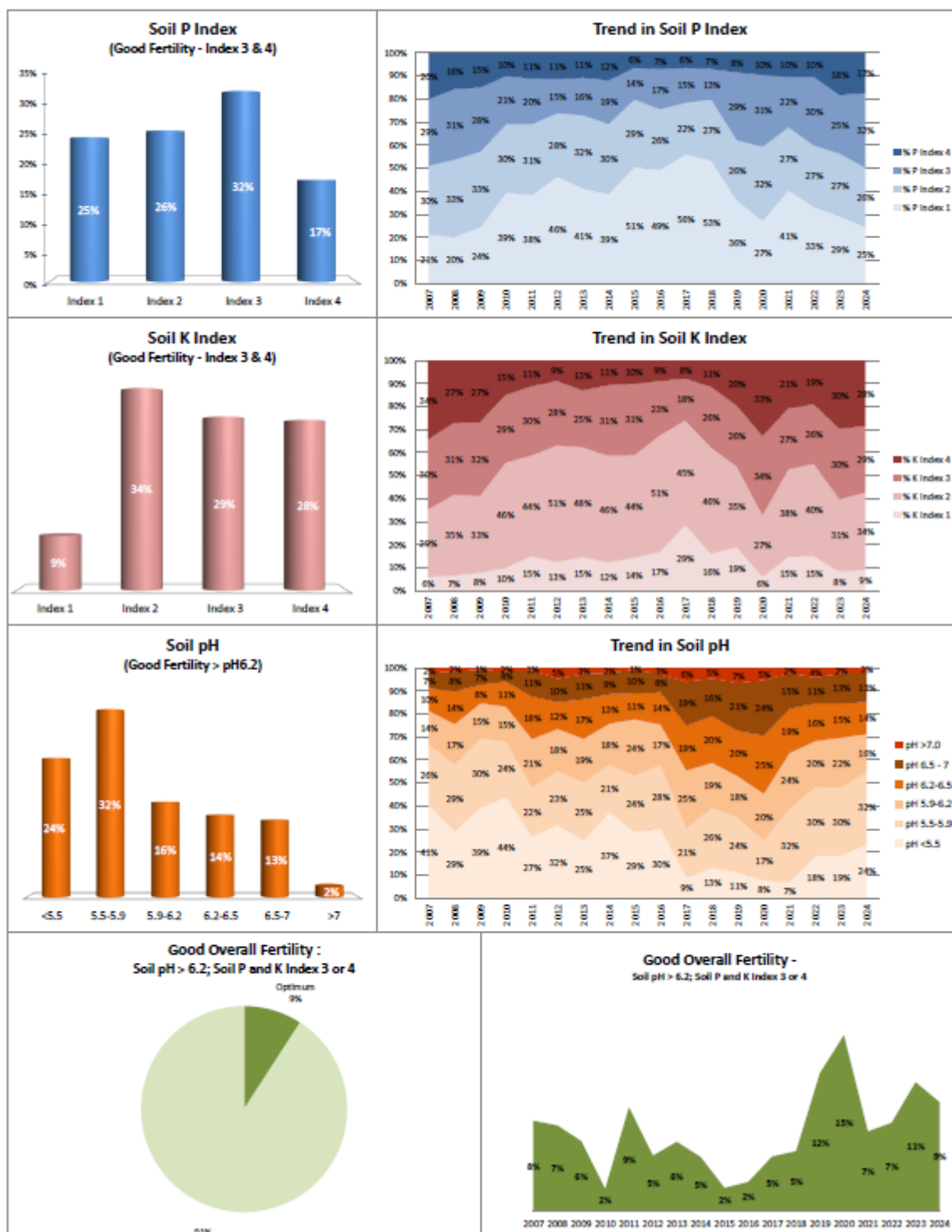






## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Donegal
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	1,356





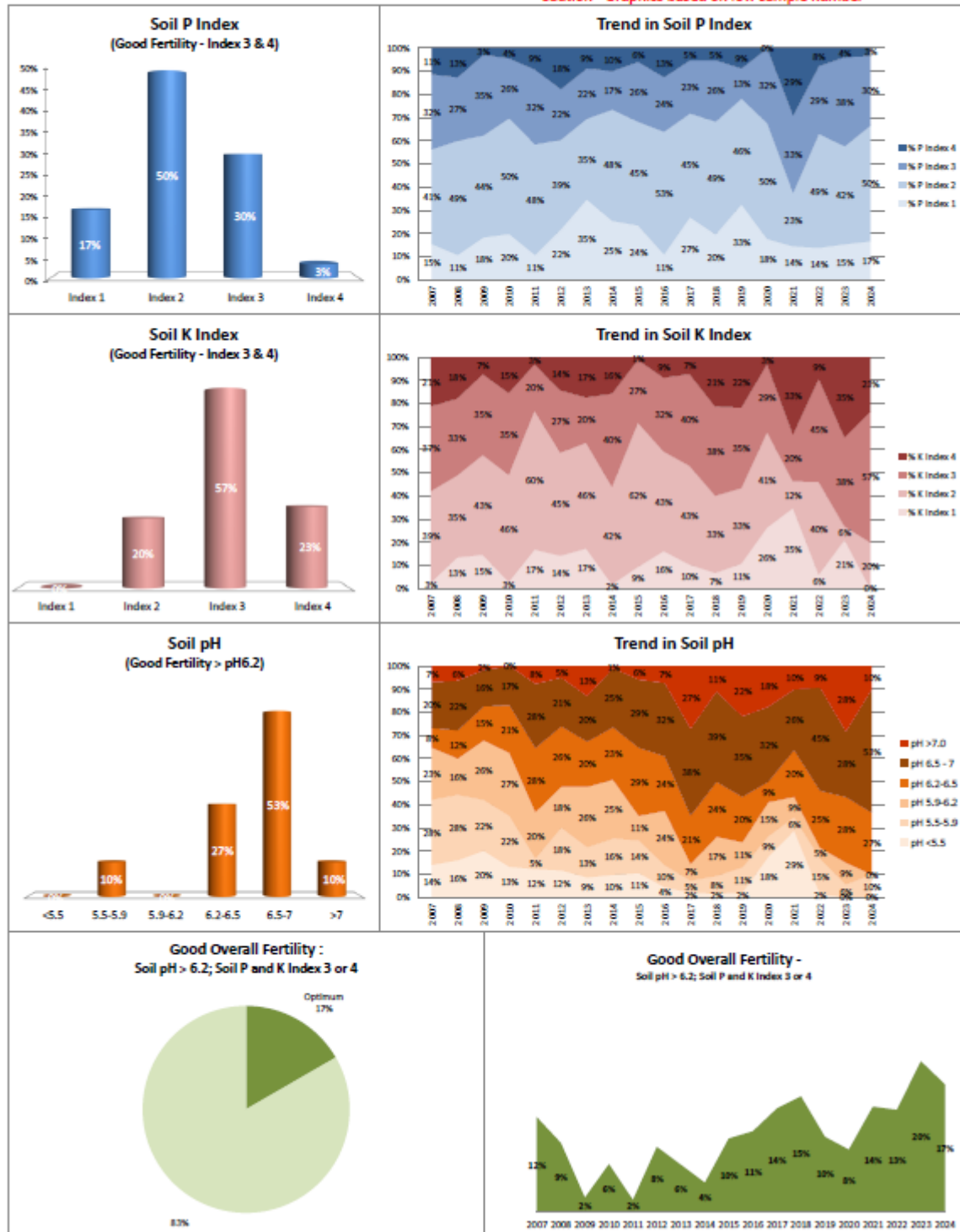
# Tillage



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Donegal
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	30

Caution - Graphics based on low sample number



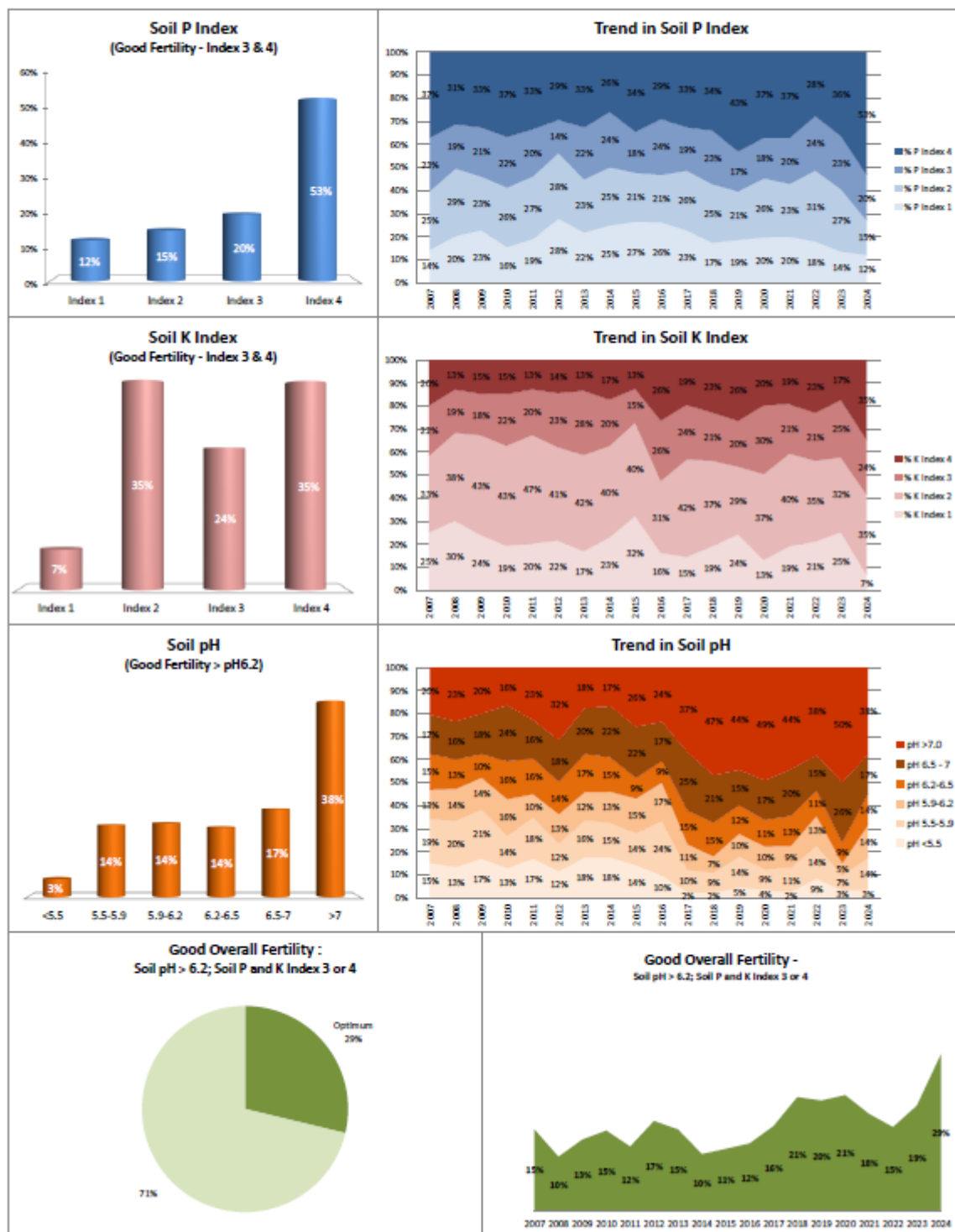
# Dublin soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



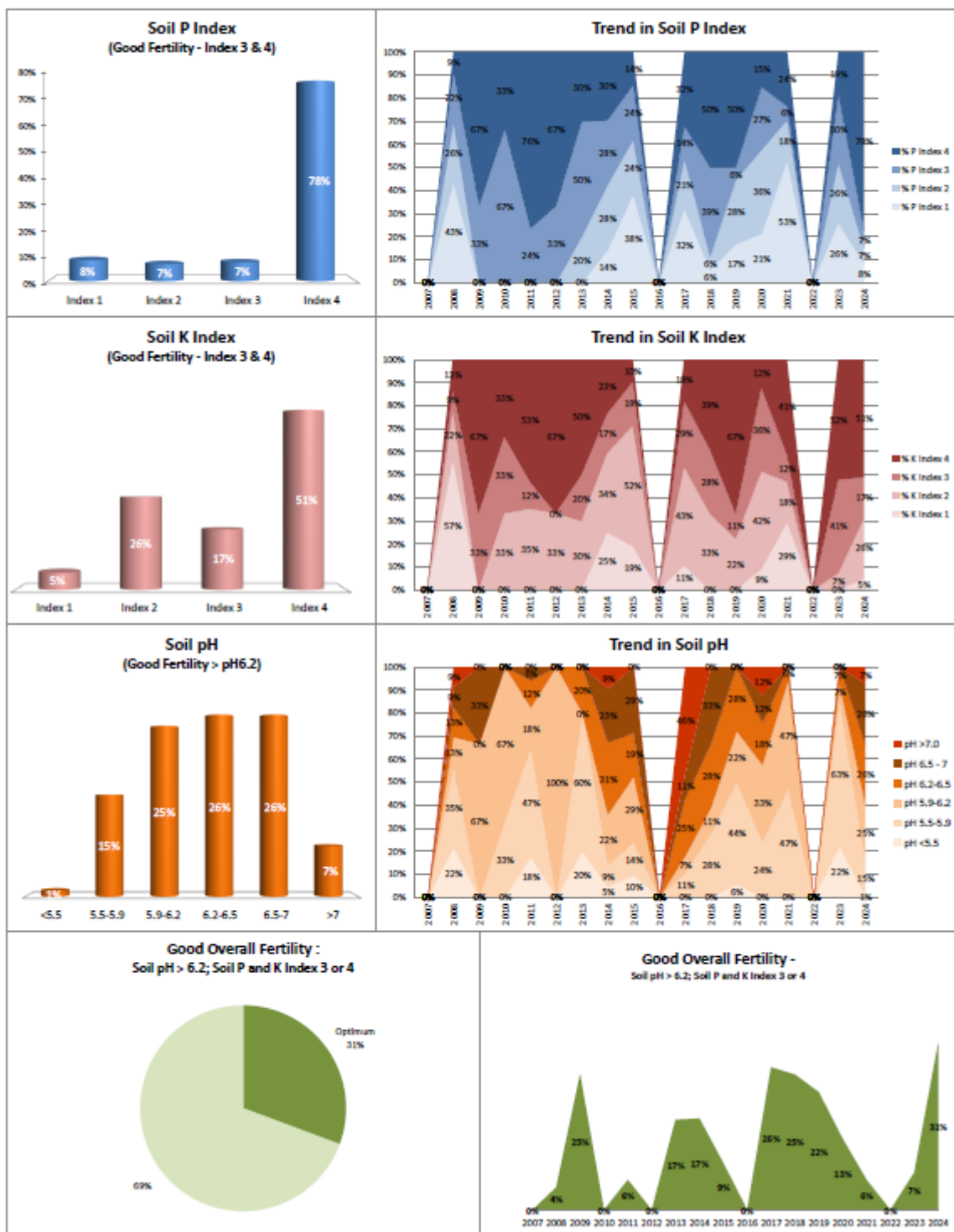
## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Dublin
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	487



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Dublin
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	121





## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

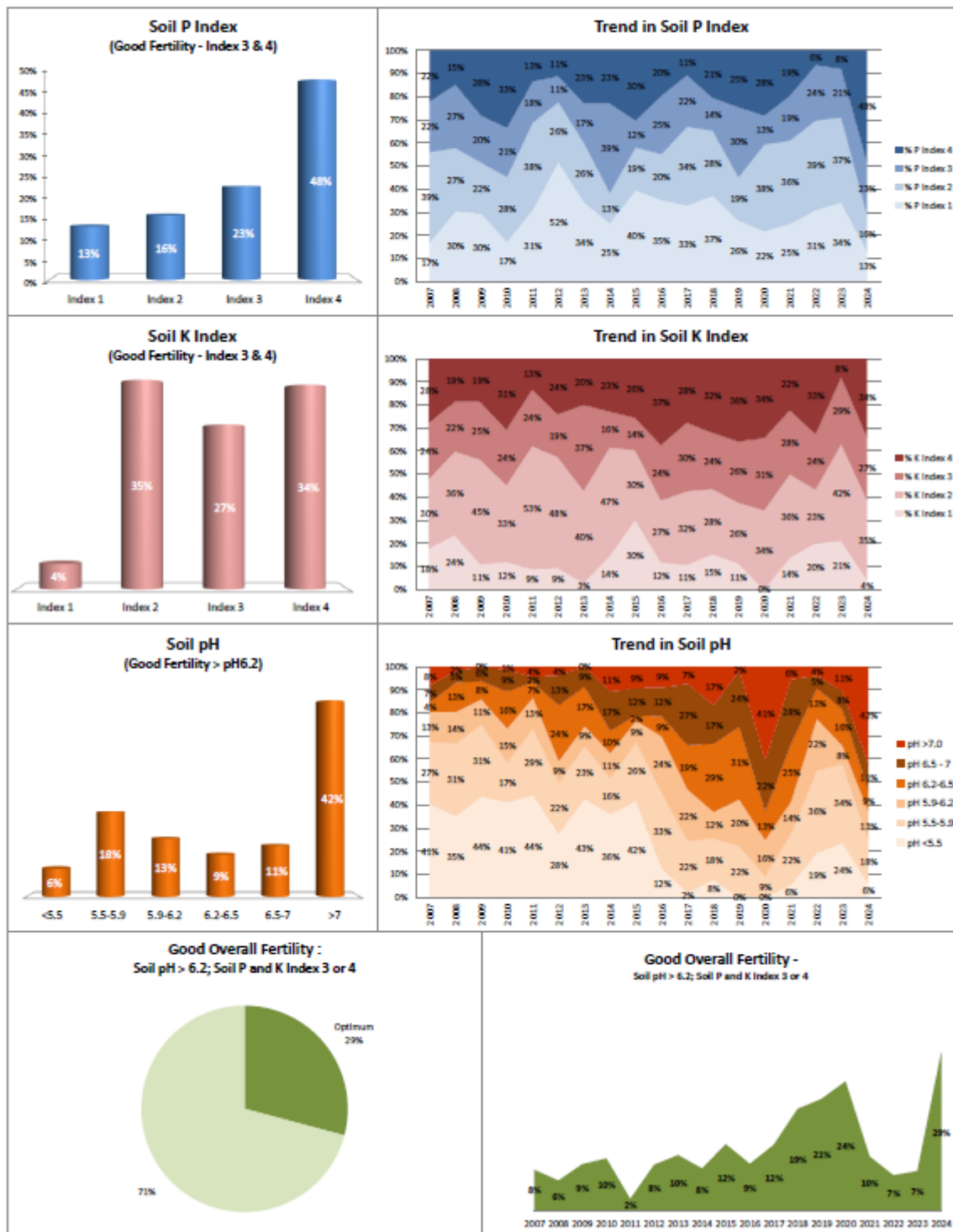
County

Year

Enterprise

Number of Samples

Dublin
2024
Drystock
260



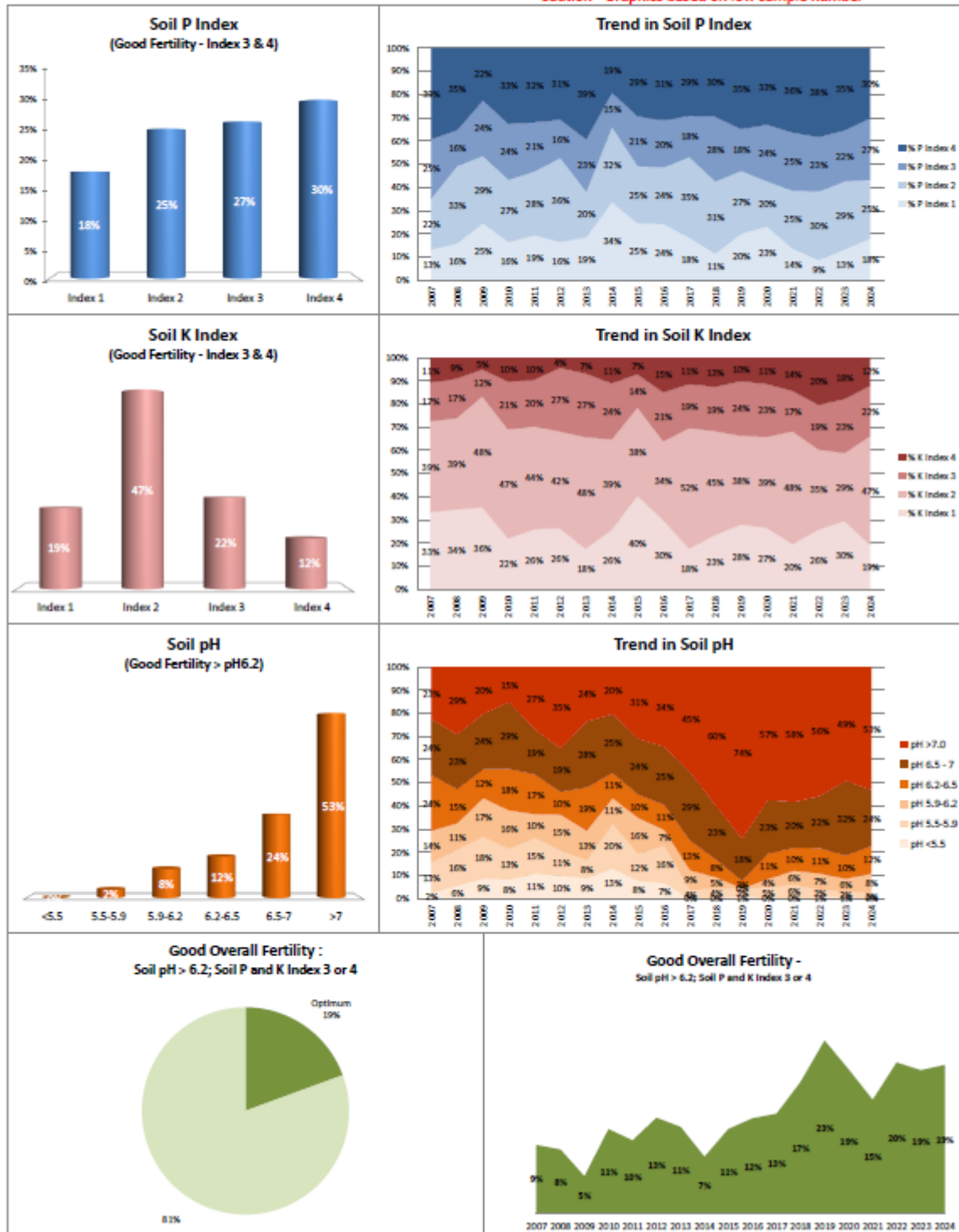
# Tillage



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Dublin
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	83

Caution - Graphics based on low sample number



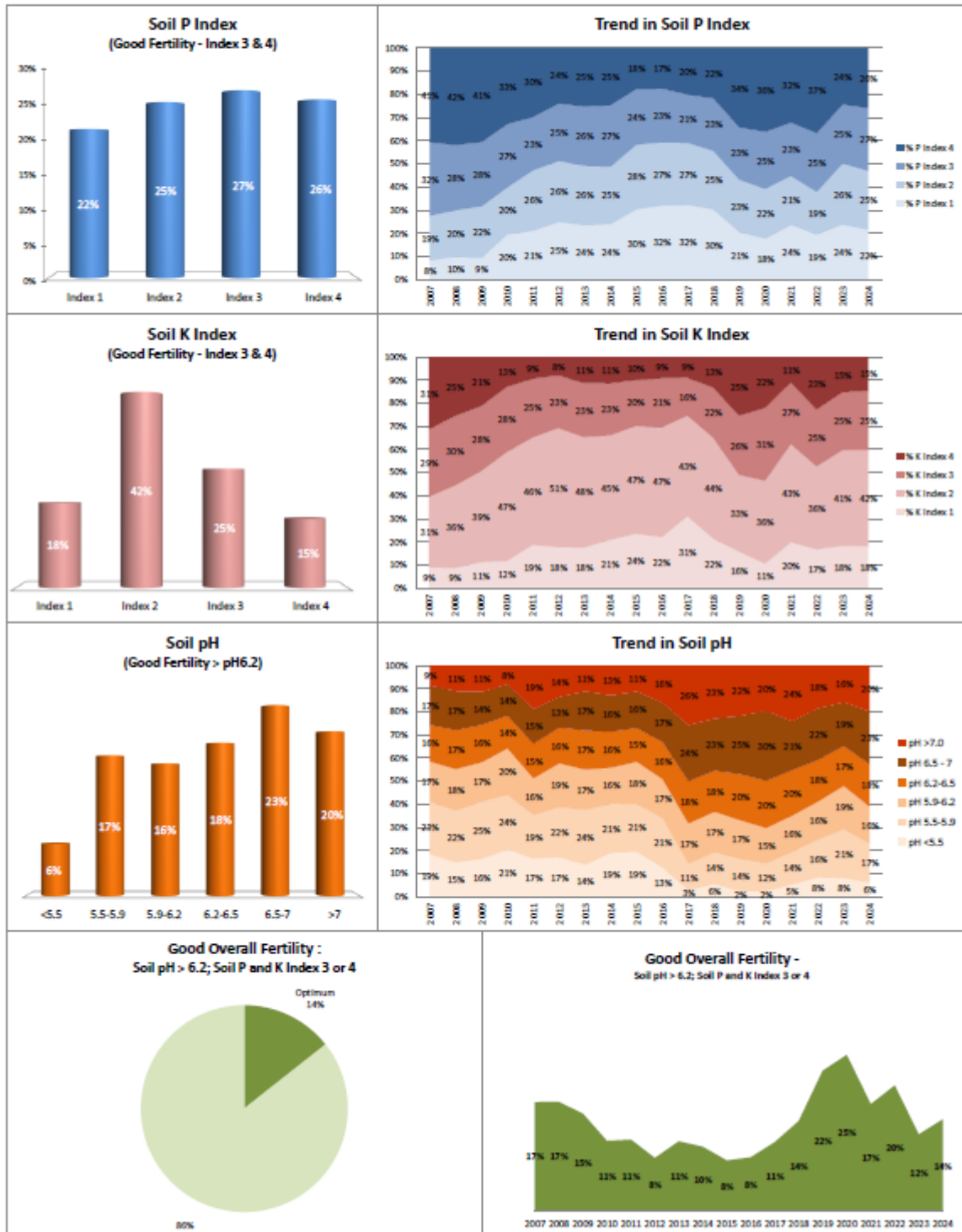
# Galway soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Galway
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	4,998

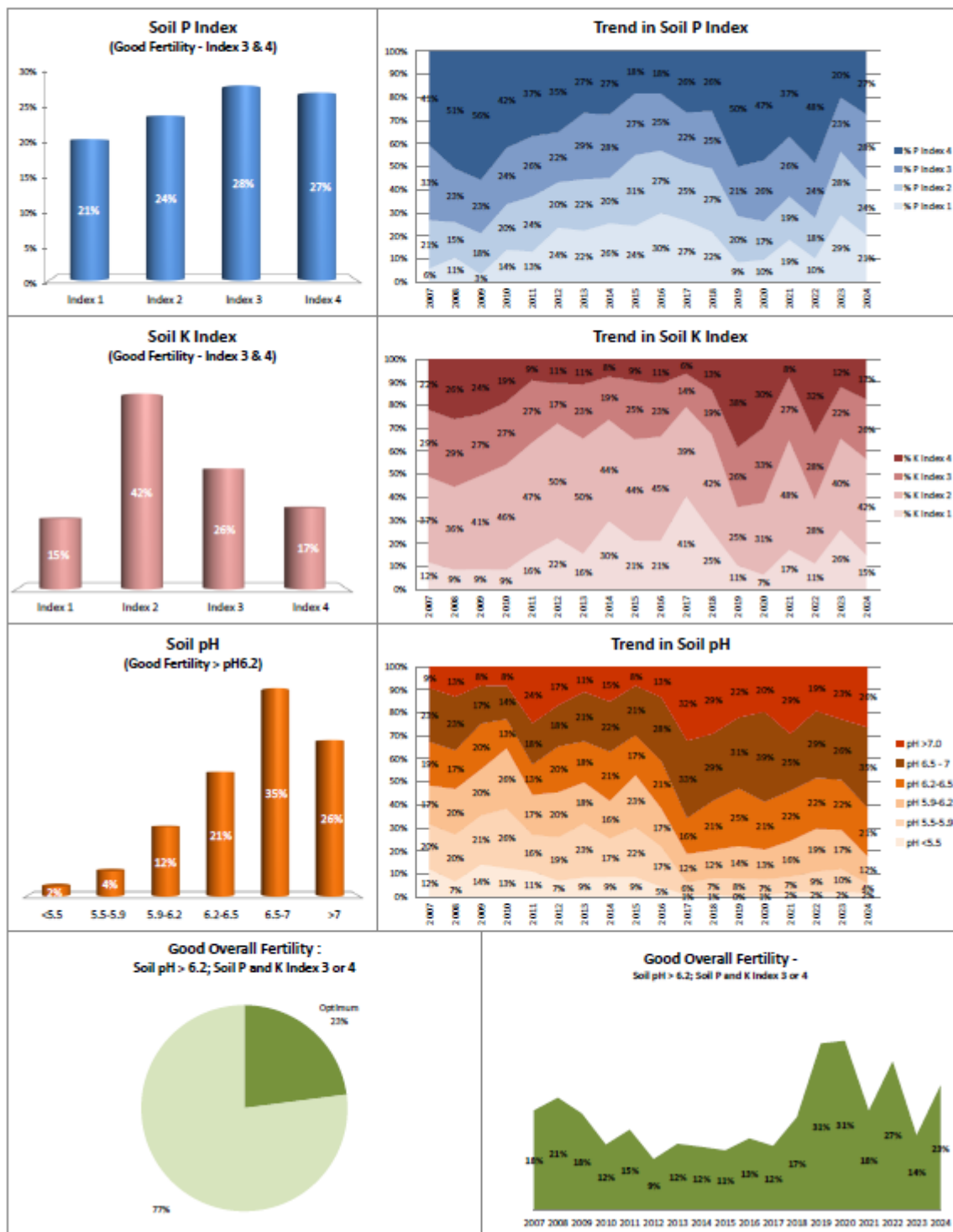


# Dairy



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Galway
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	881

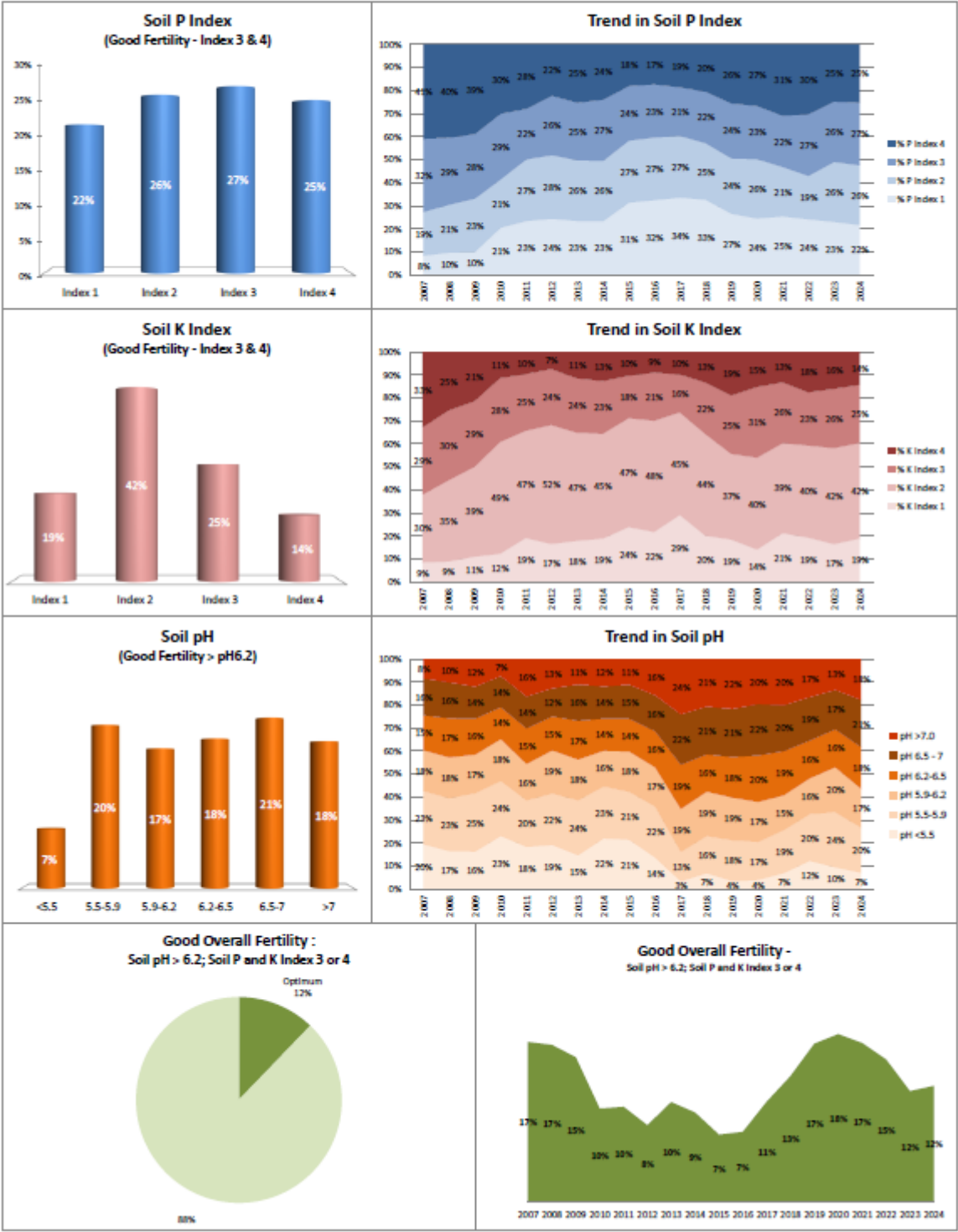






Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Galway
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	4,009





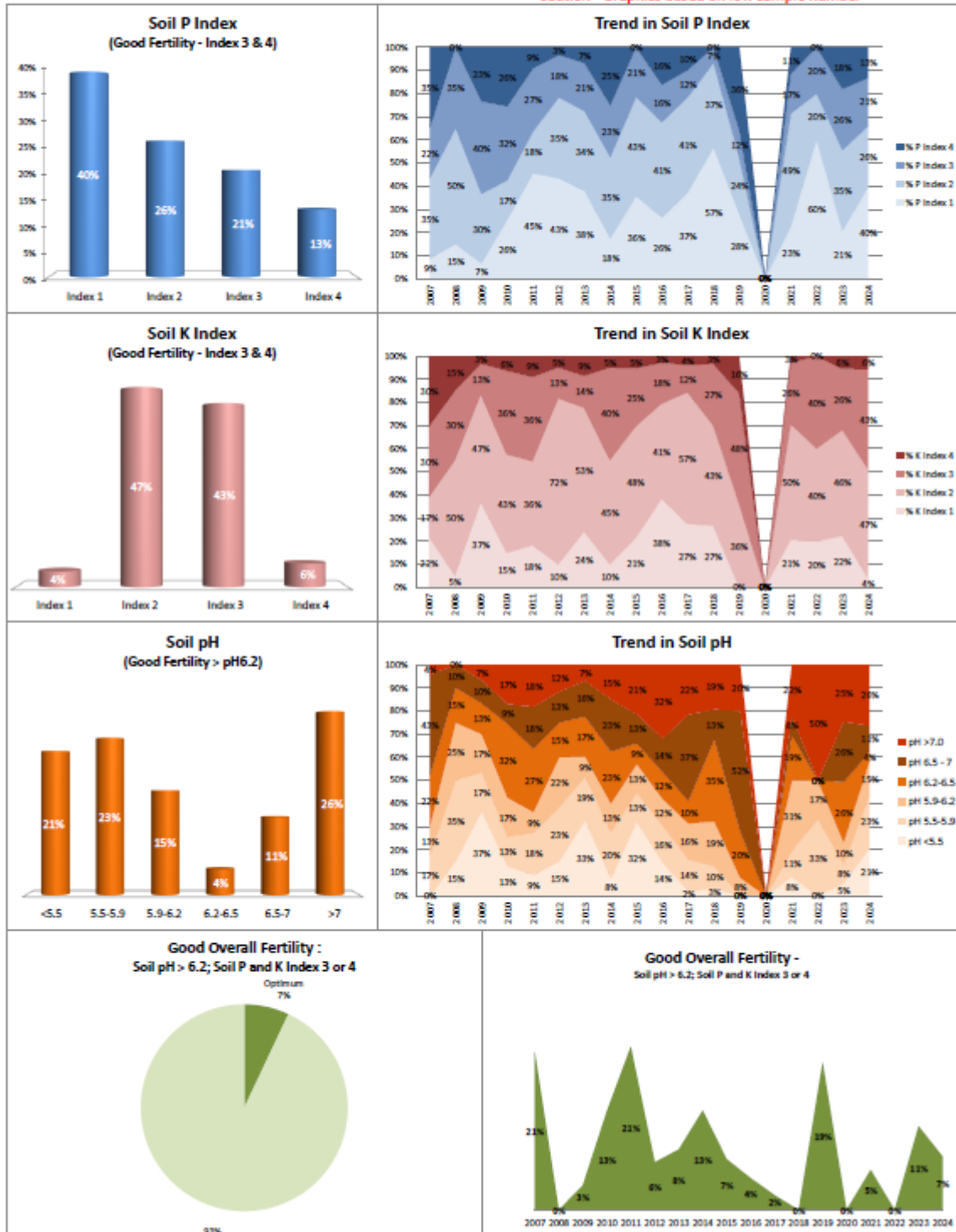
# Tillage



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Galway
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	53

Caution - Graphics based on low sample number



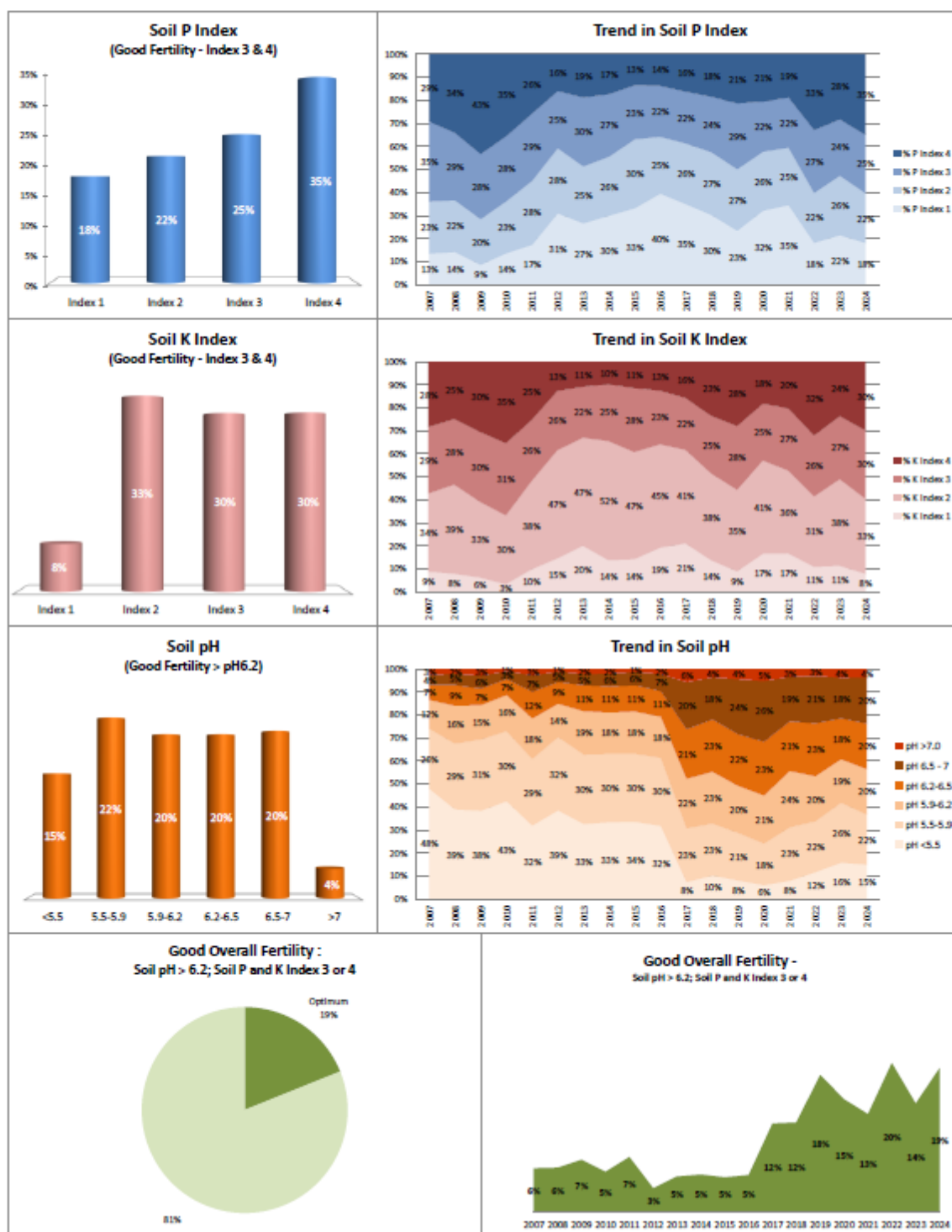
# Kerry soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

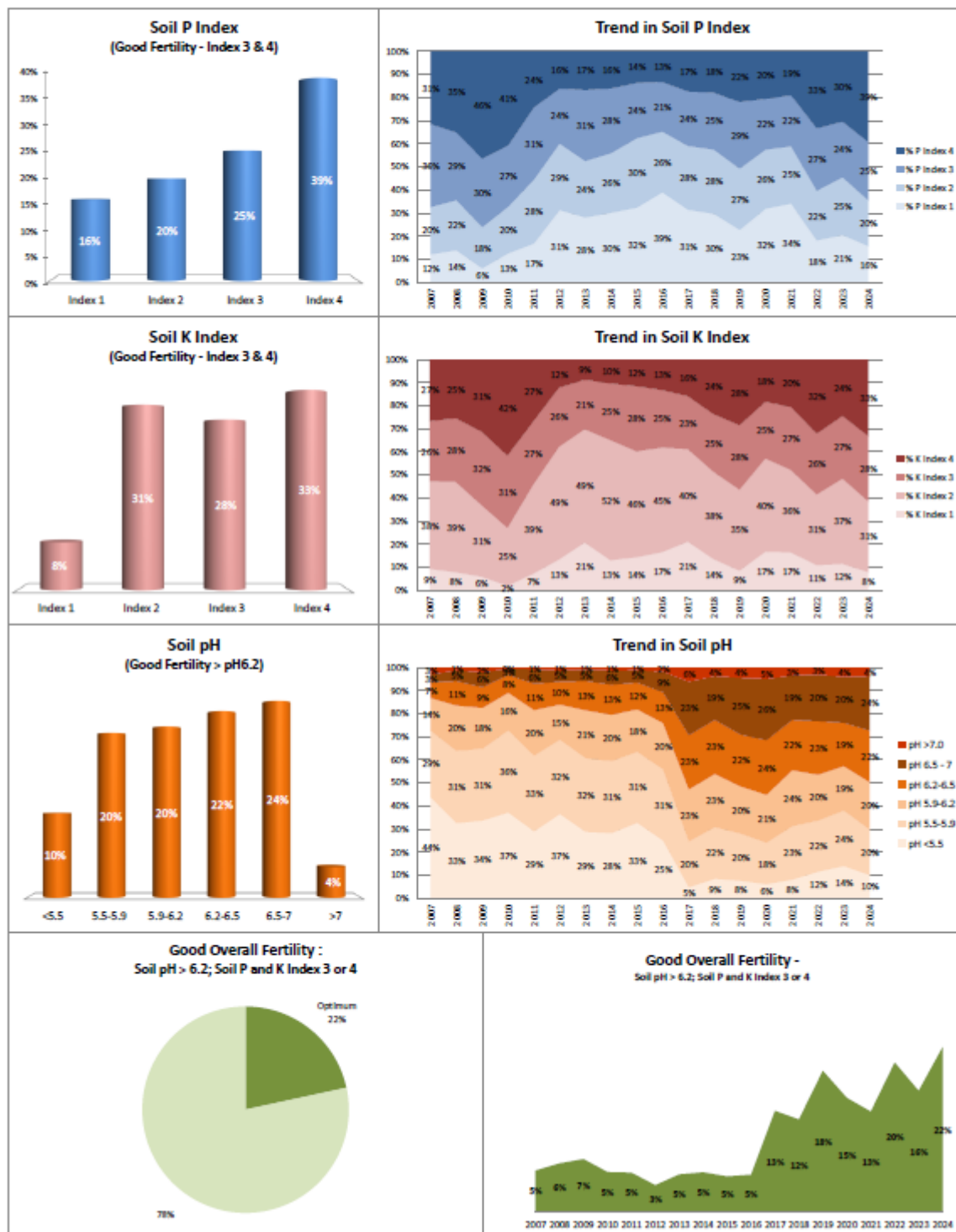
County	Kerry
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	2,606





## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Kerry
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	1,938



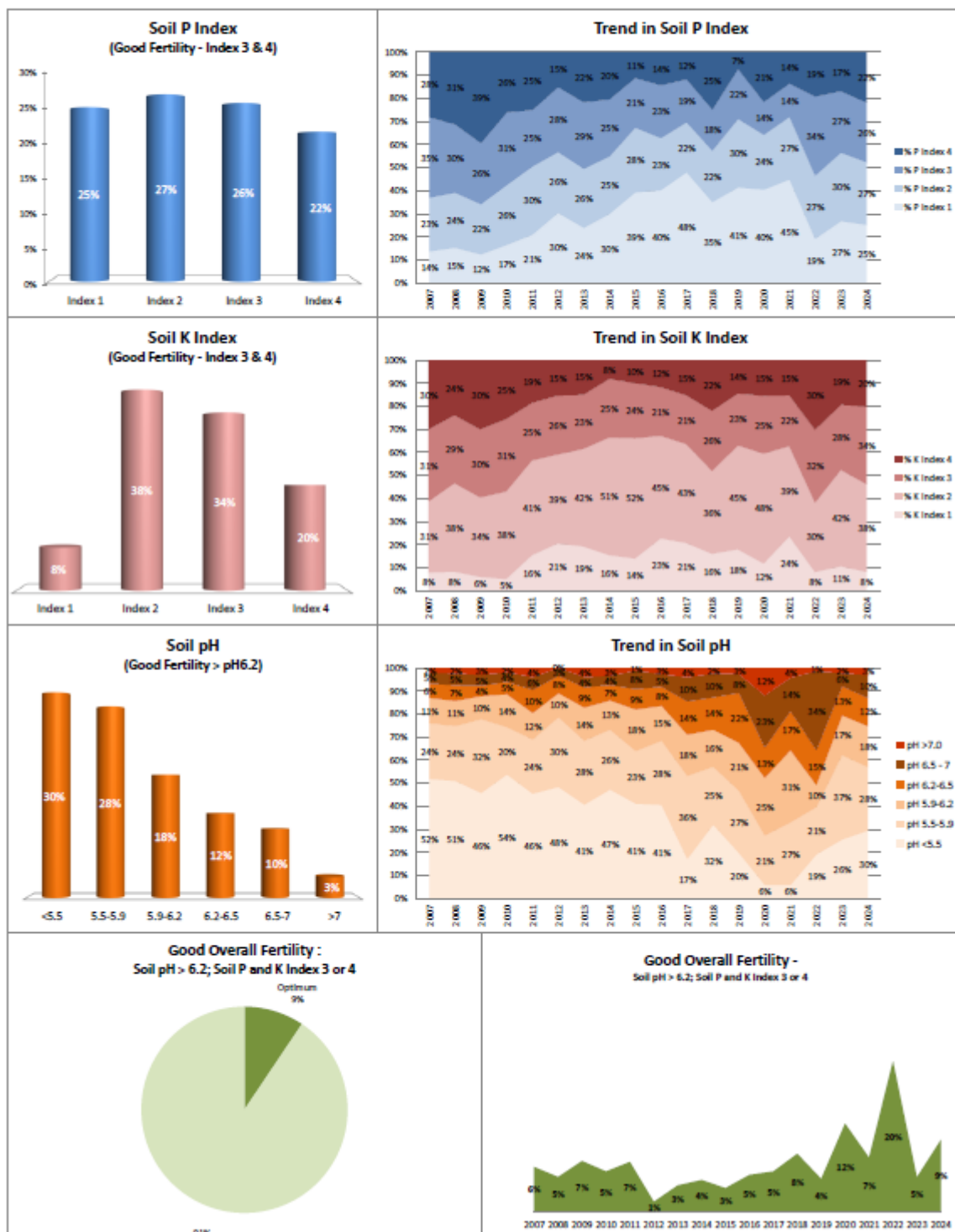
Drystock



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County  
Year  
Enterprise  
Number of Samples

Kerry
2024
Drystock
653



Tillage

Insufficient data set available

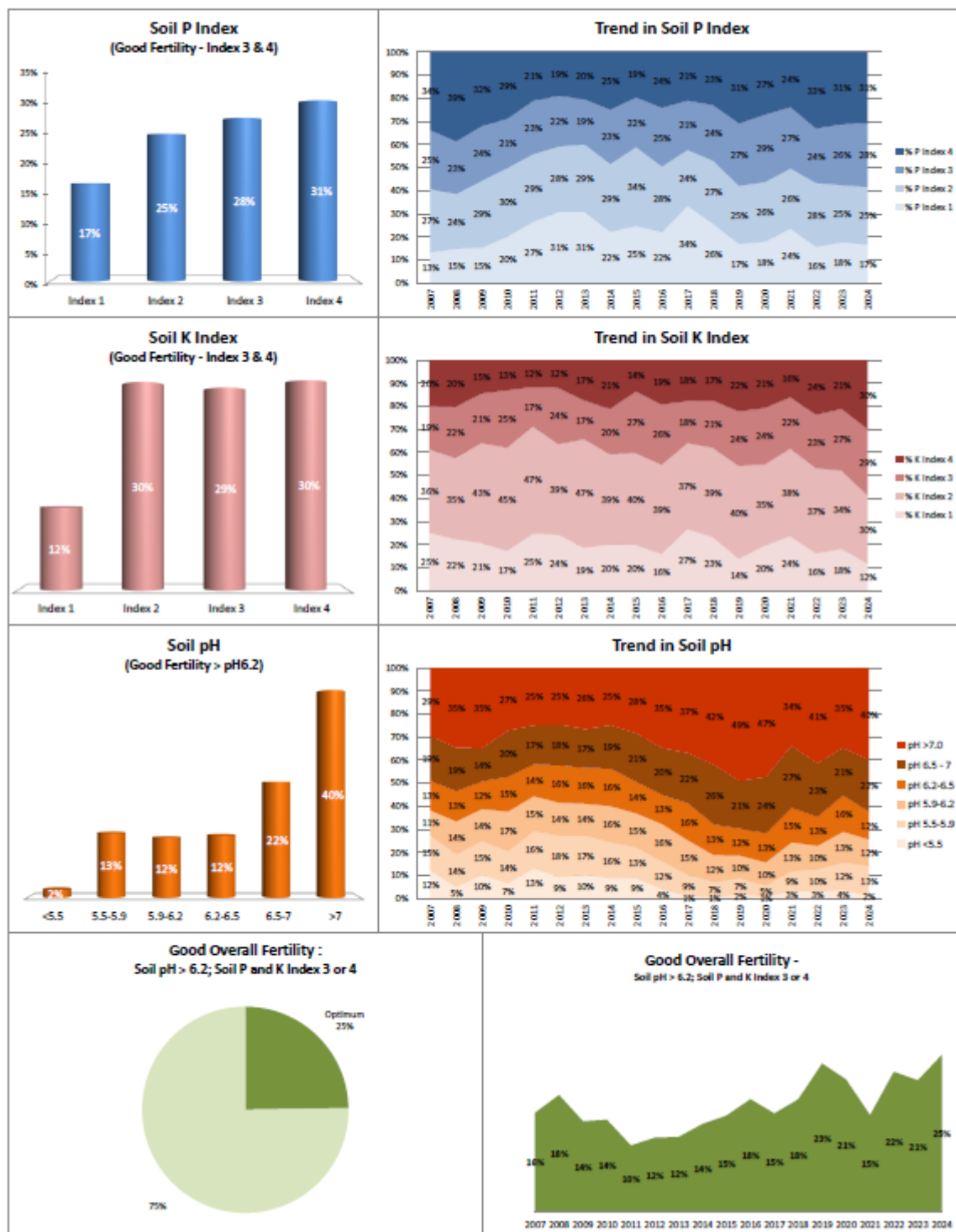
# Kildare soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises

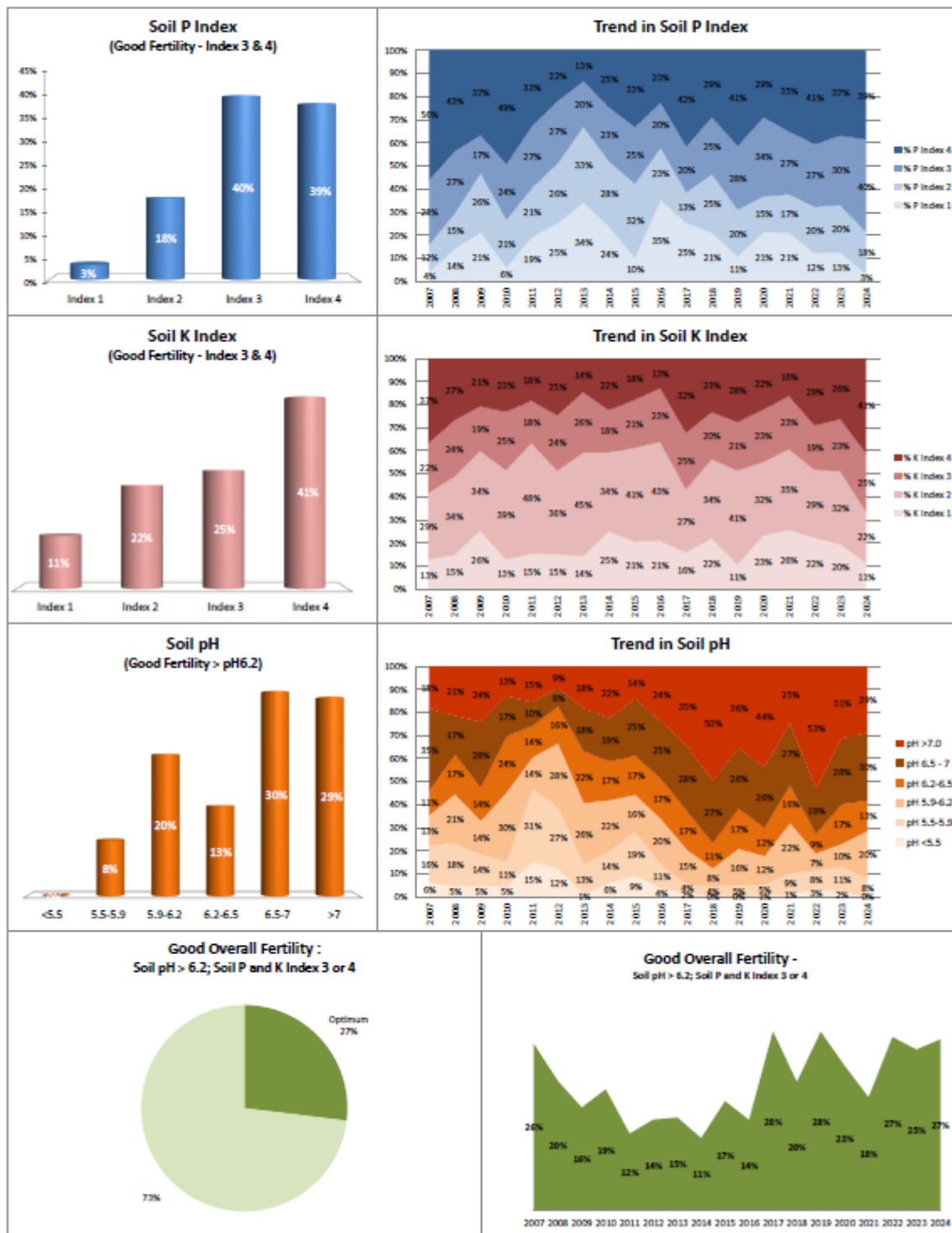


## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Kildare
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	1,063



County	Kildare
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	122

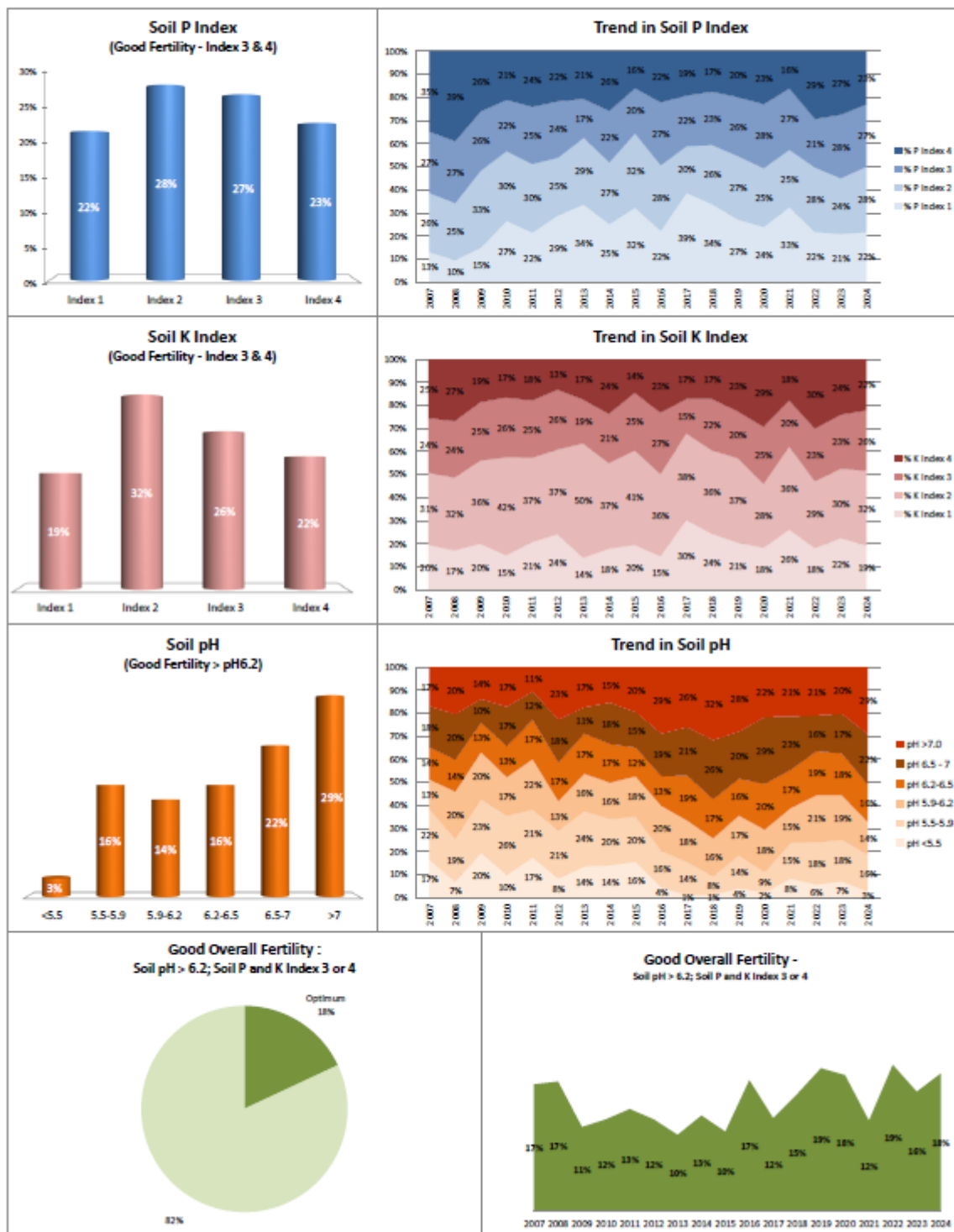




## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County  
Year  
Enterprise  
Number of Samples

Kildare
2024
Drystock
511



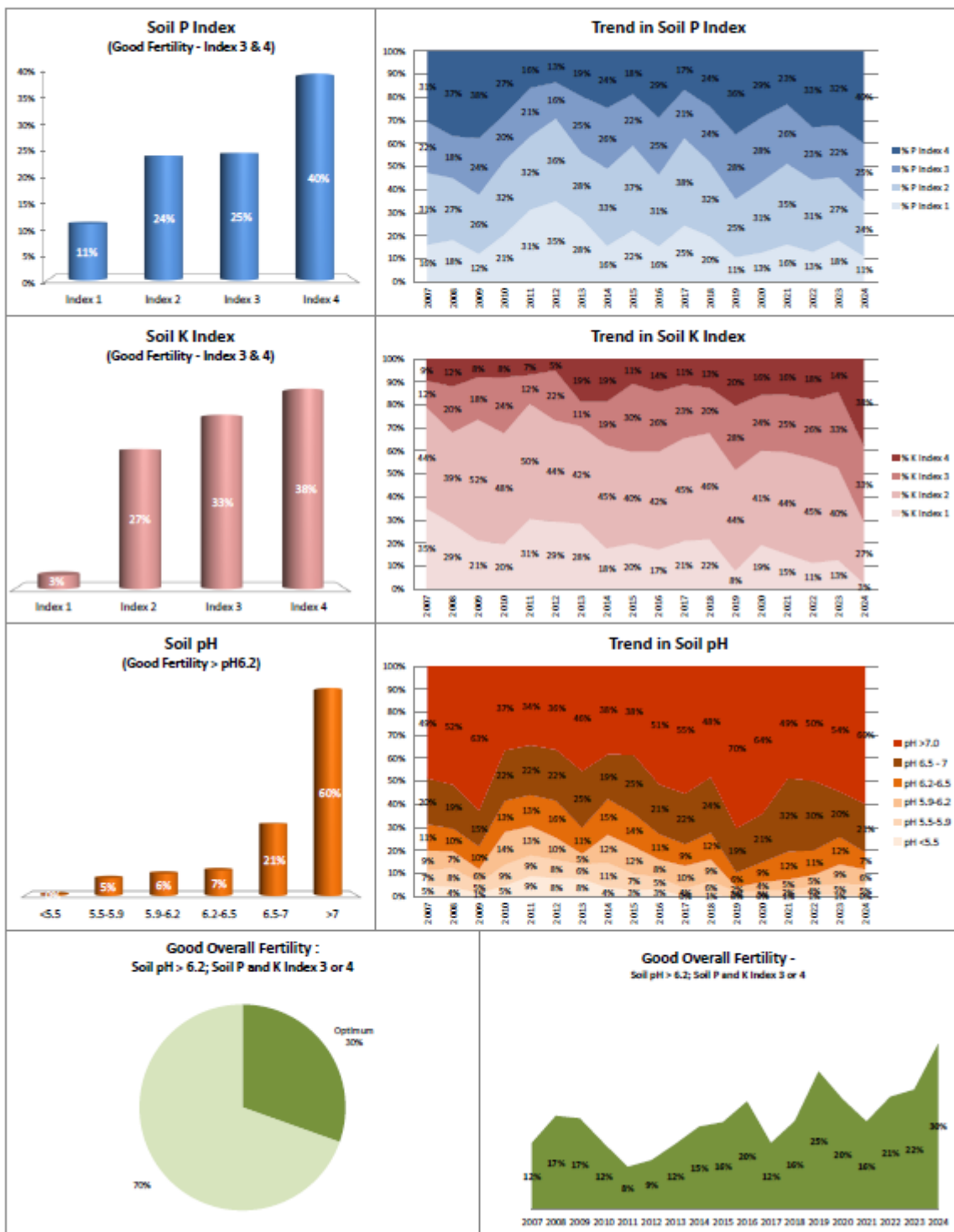


# Tillage



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Kildare
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	388





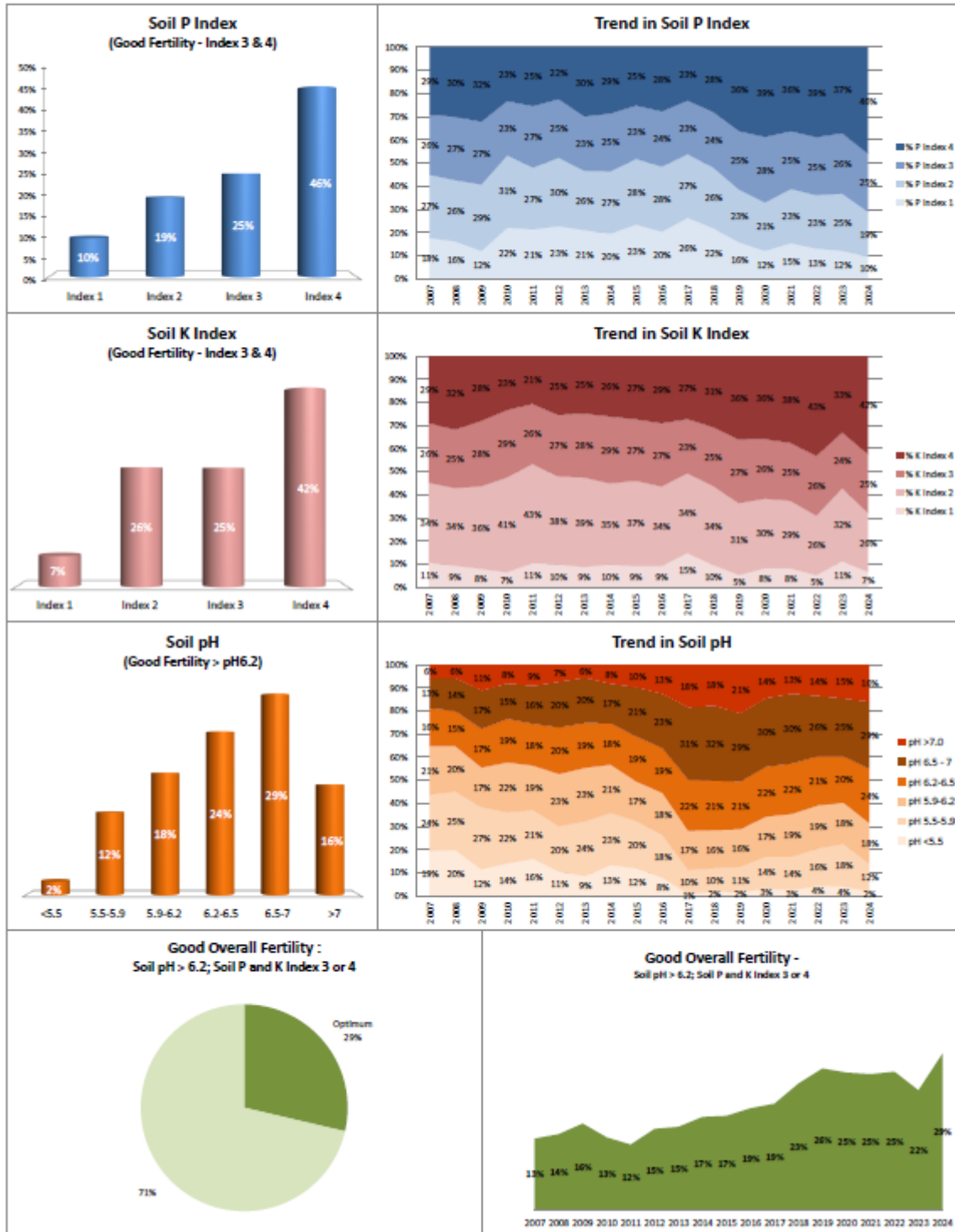
# Kilkenny soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises

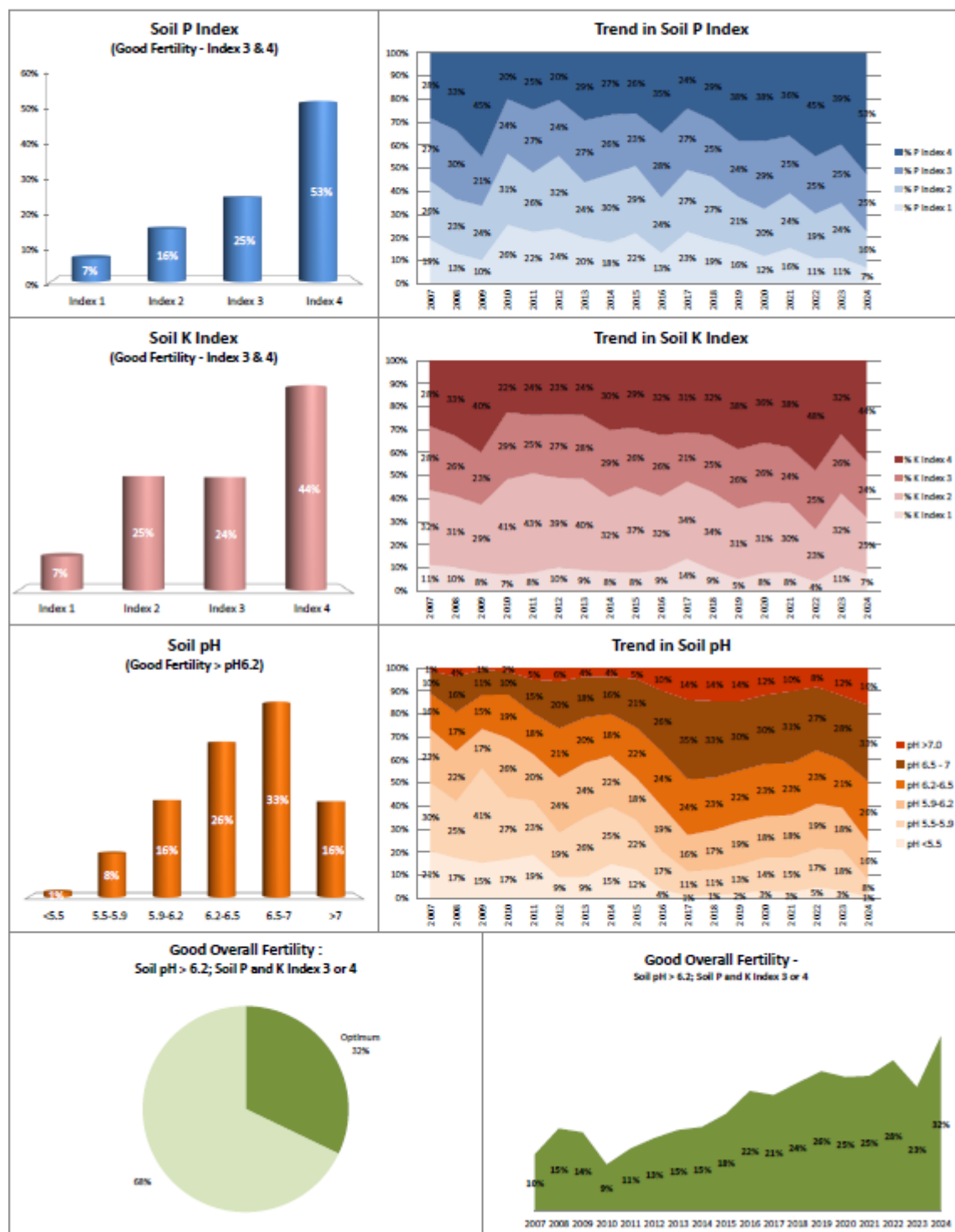


## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

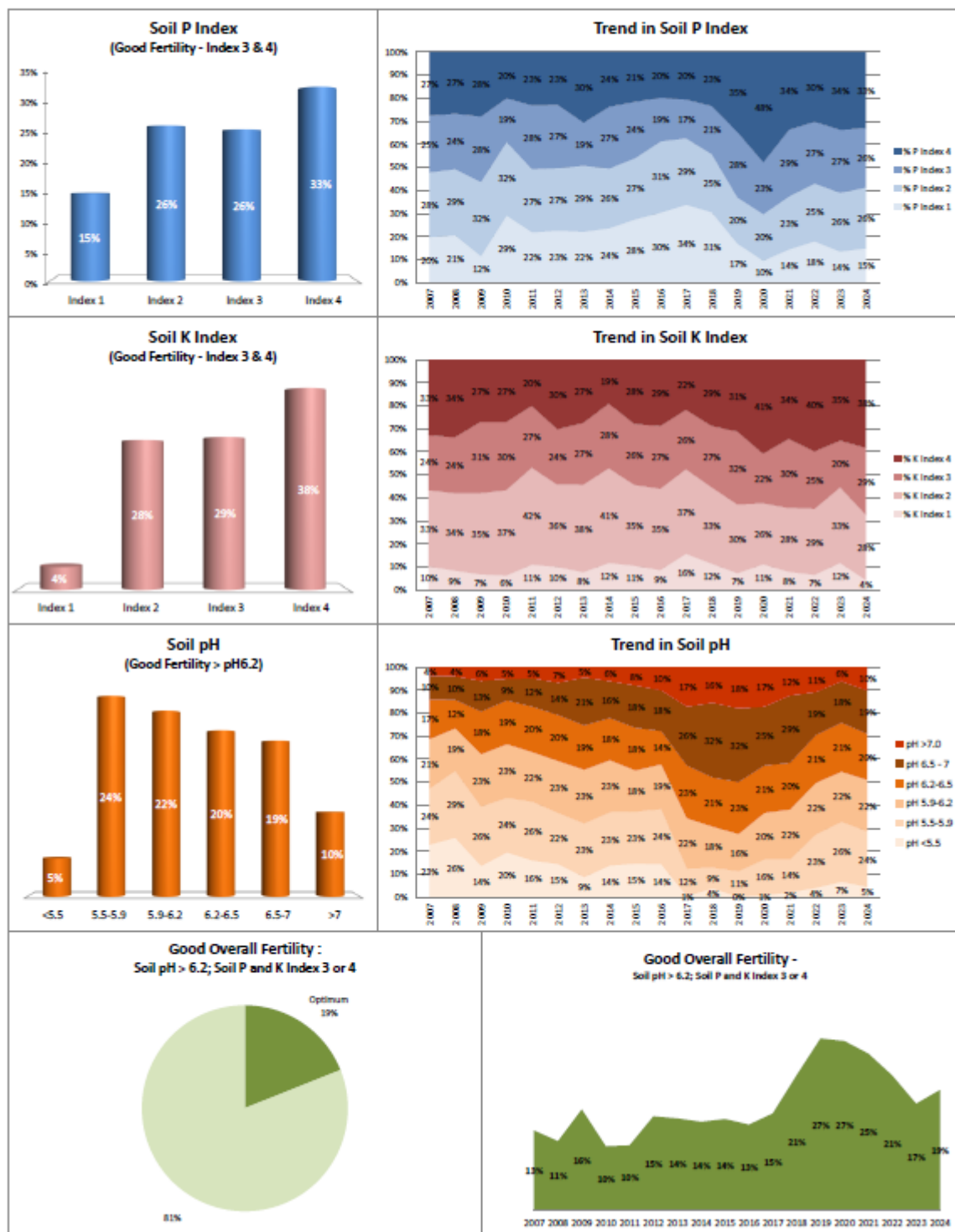
County	Kilkenny
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	3,031



County	Kilkenny
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	1,996



County	Kilkenny
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	842

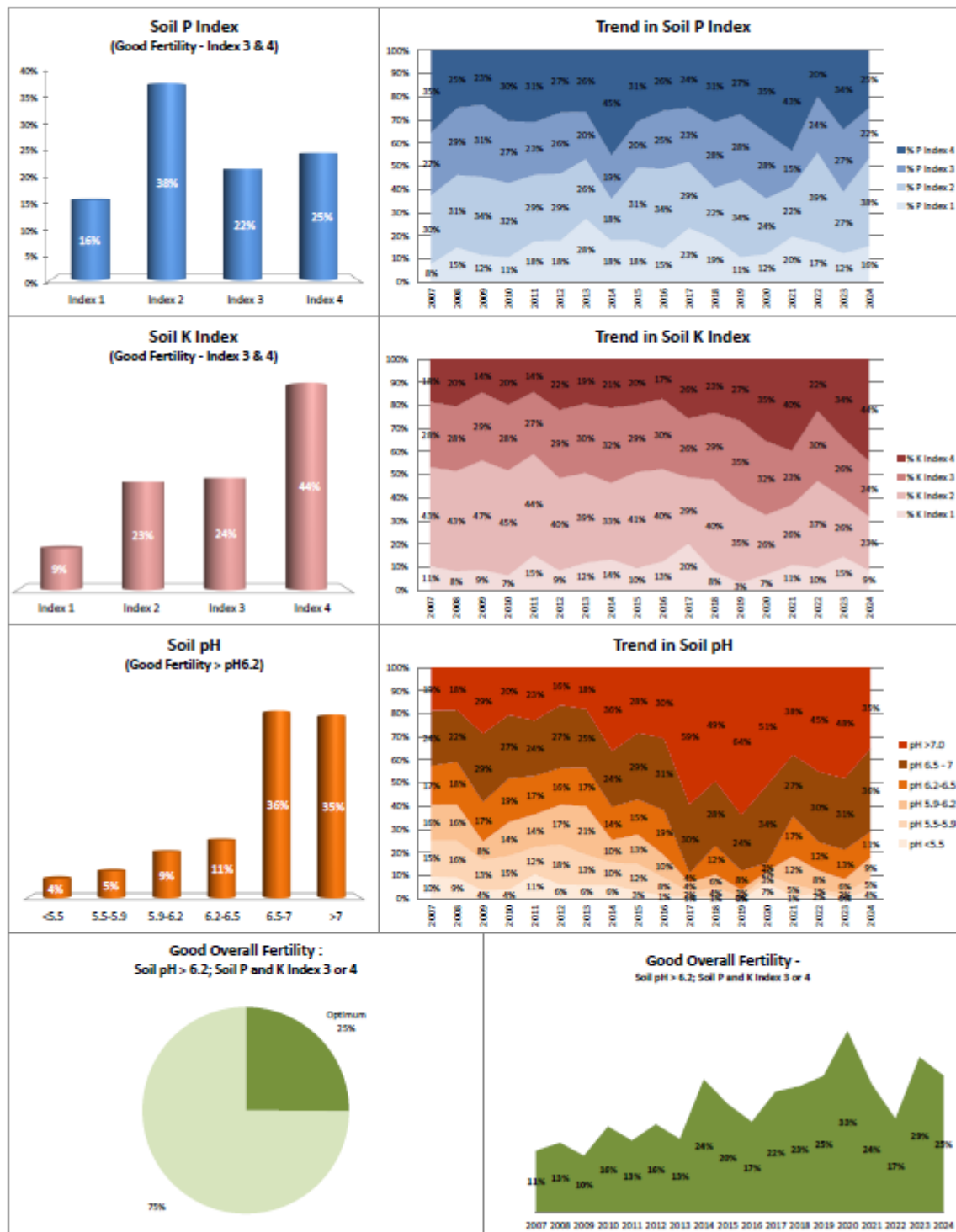


# Tillage



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Kilkenny
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	134



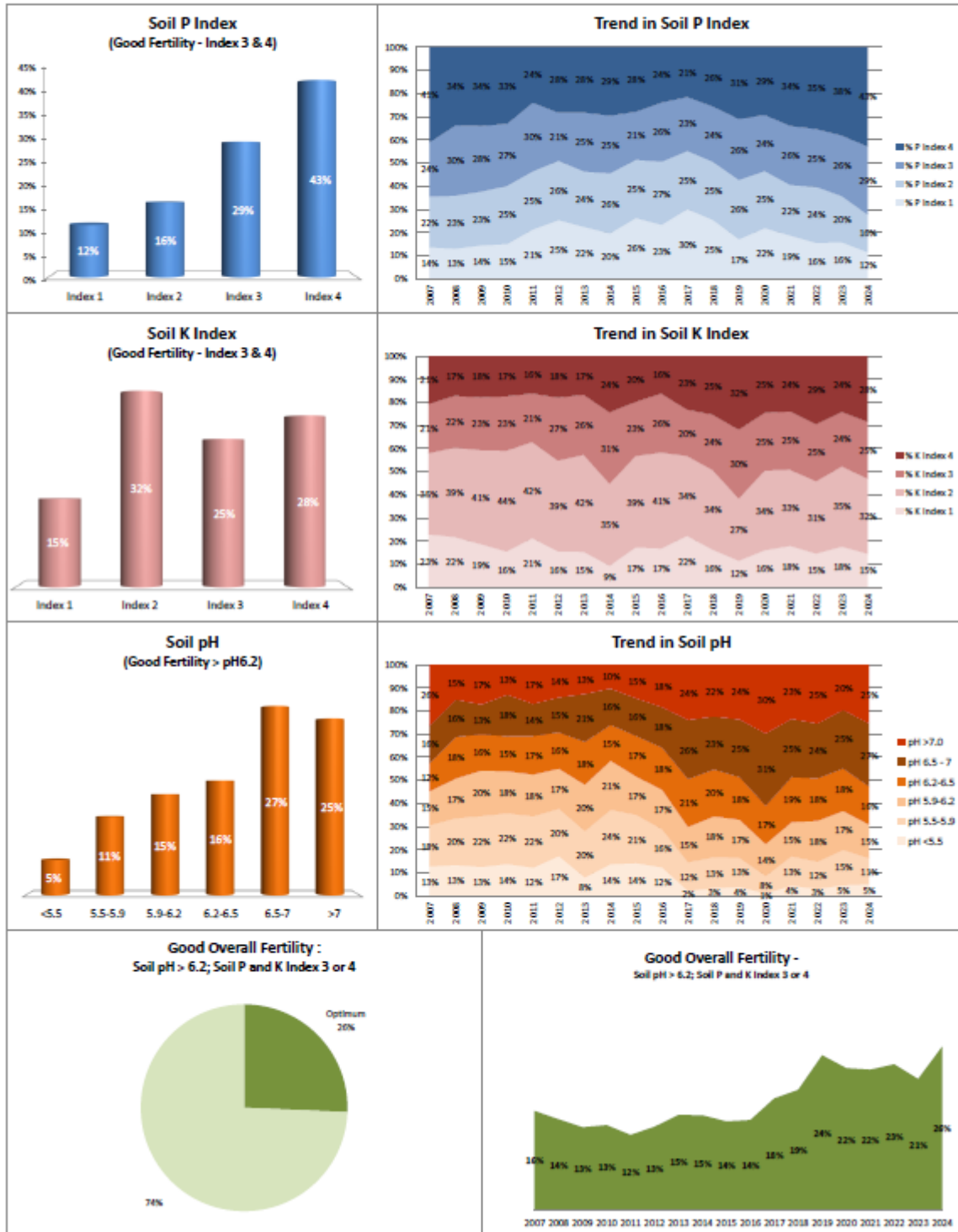
# Laois soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Laois
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	1,468

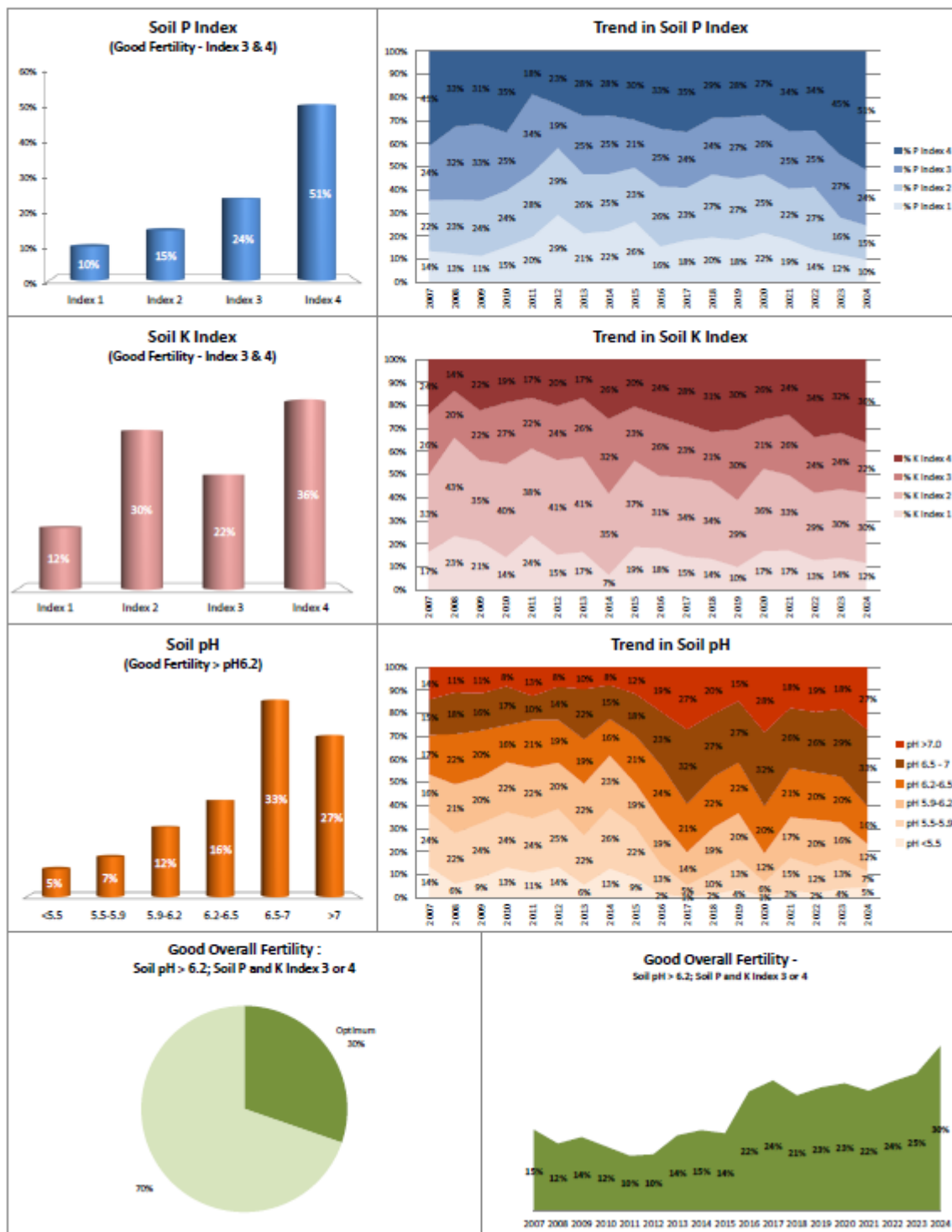


# Dairy



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Laois
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	736

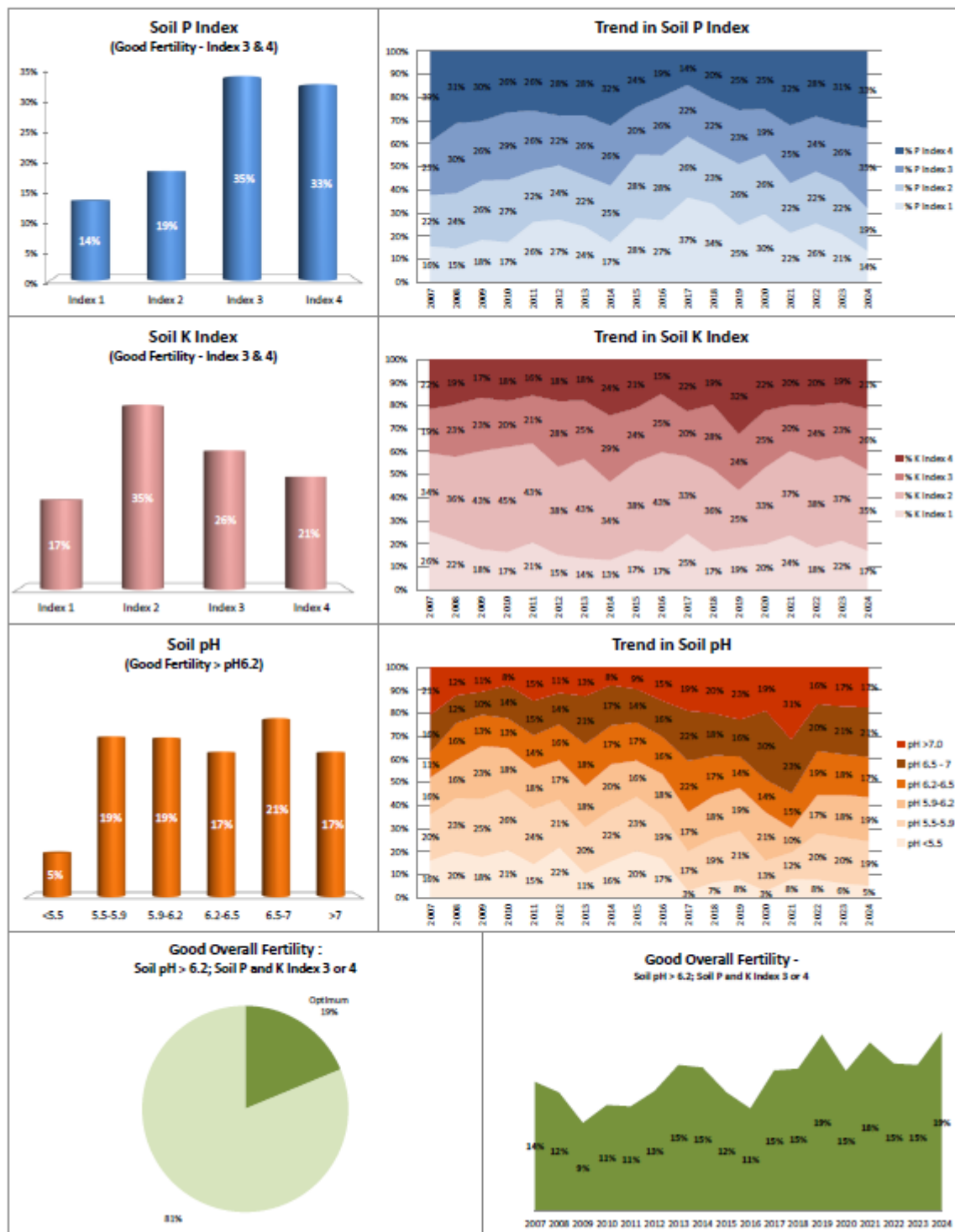


# Drystock



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Laois
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	602



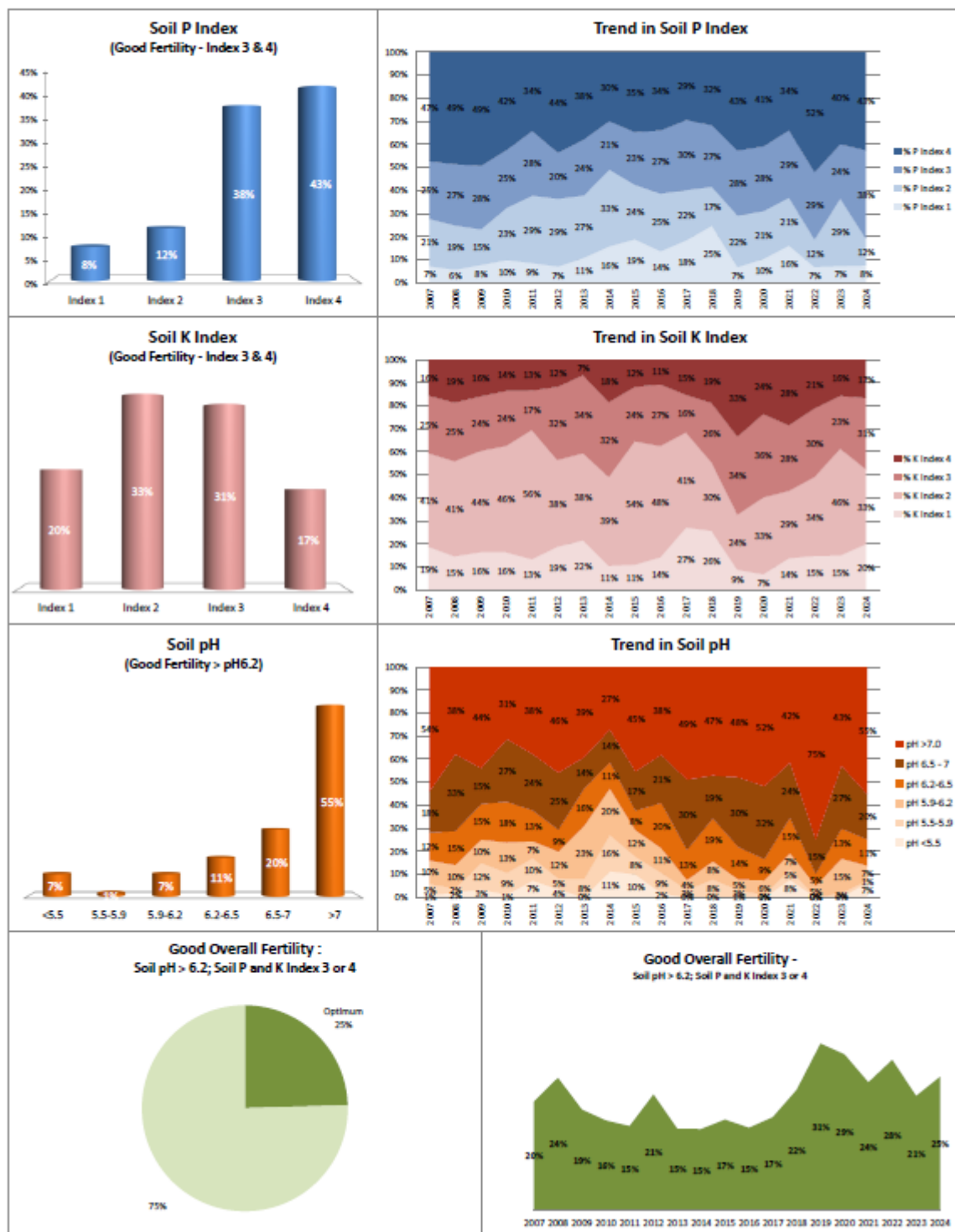


# Tillage



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Laois
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	120





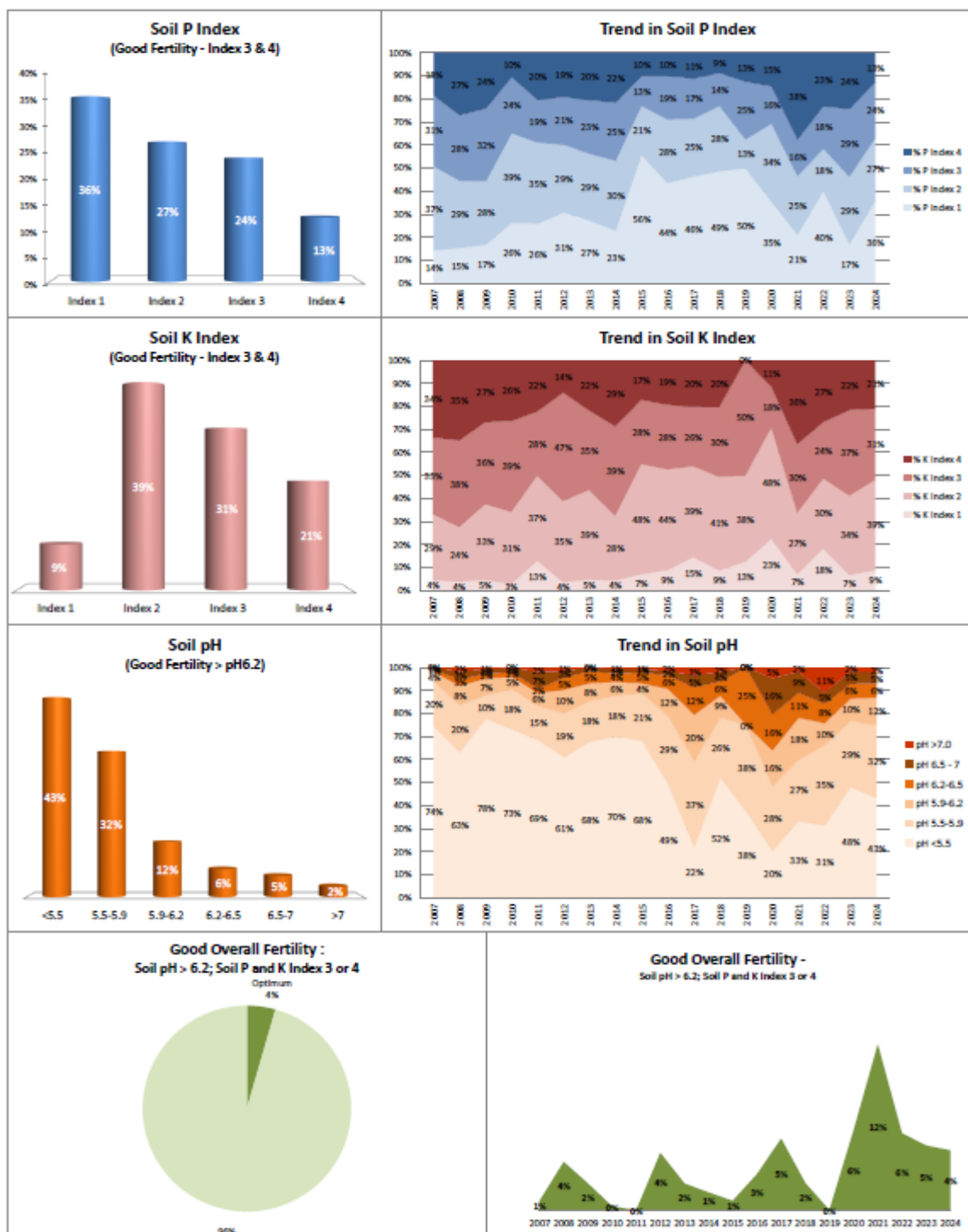
# Leitrim soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Leitrim
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	990



Dairy

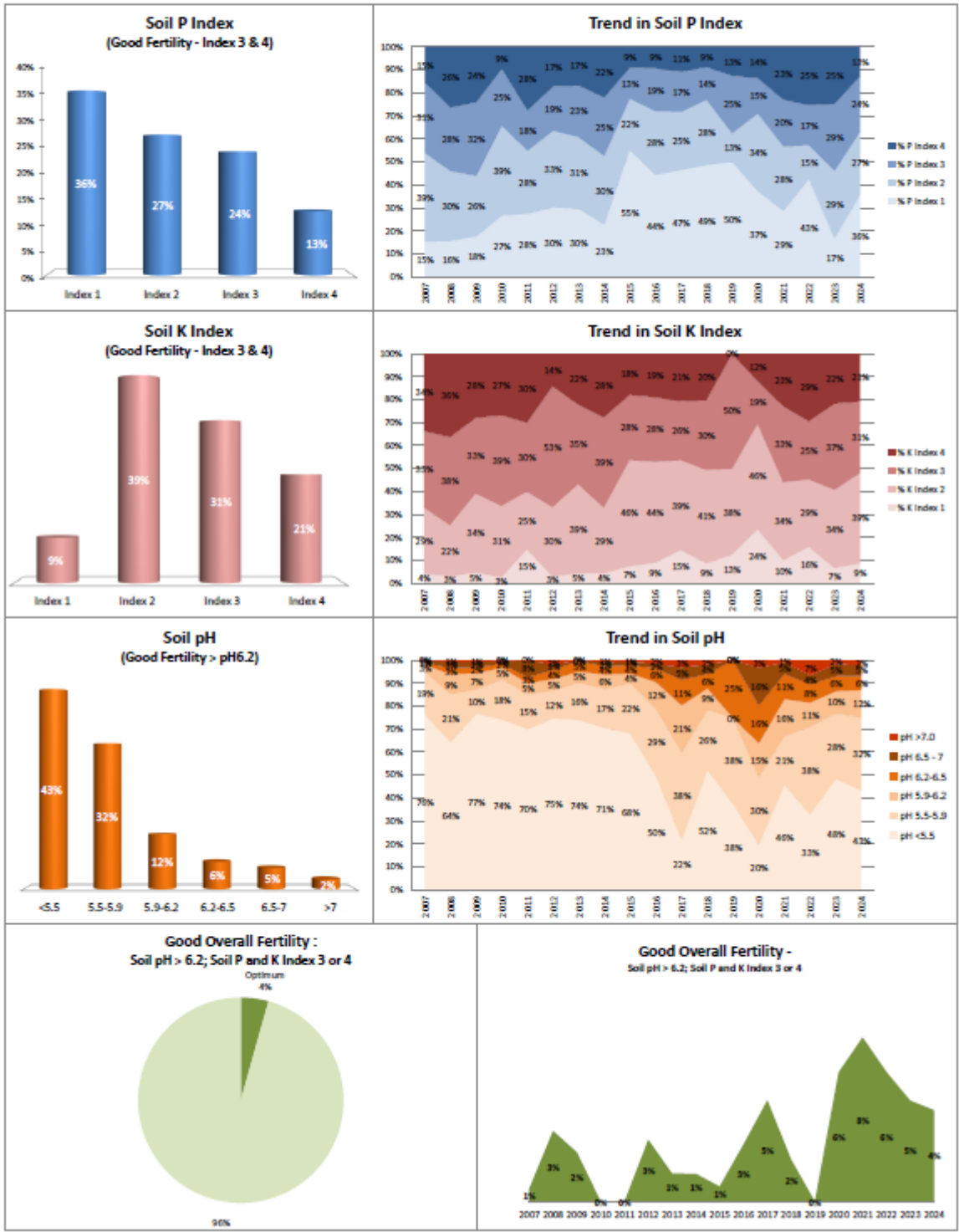
Insufficient data set available

Drystock



Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Leitrim
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	906



Tillage

Insufficient data set available

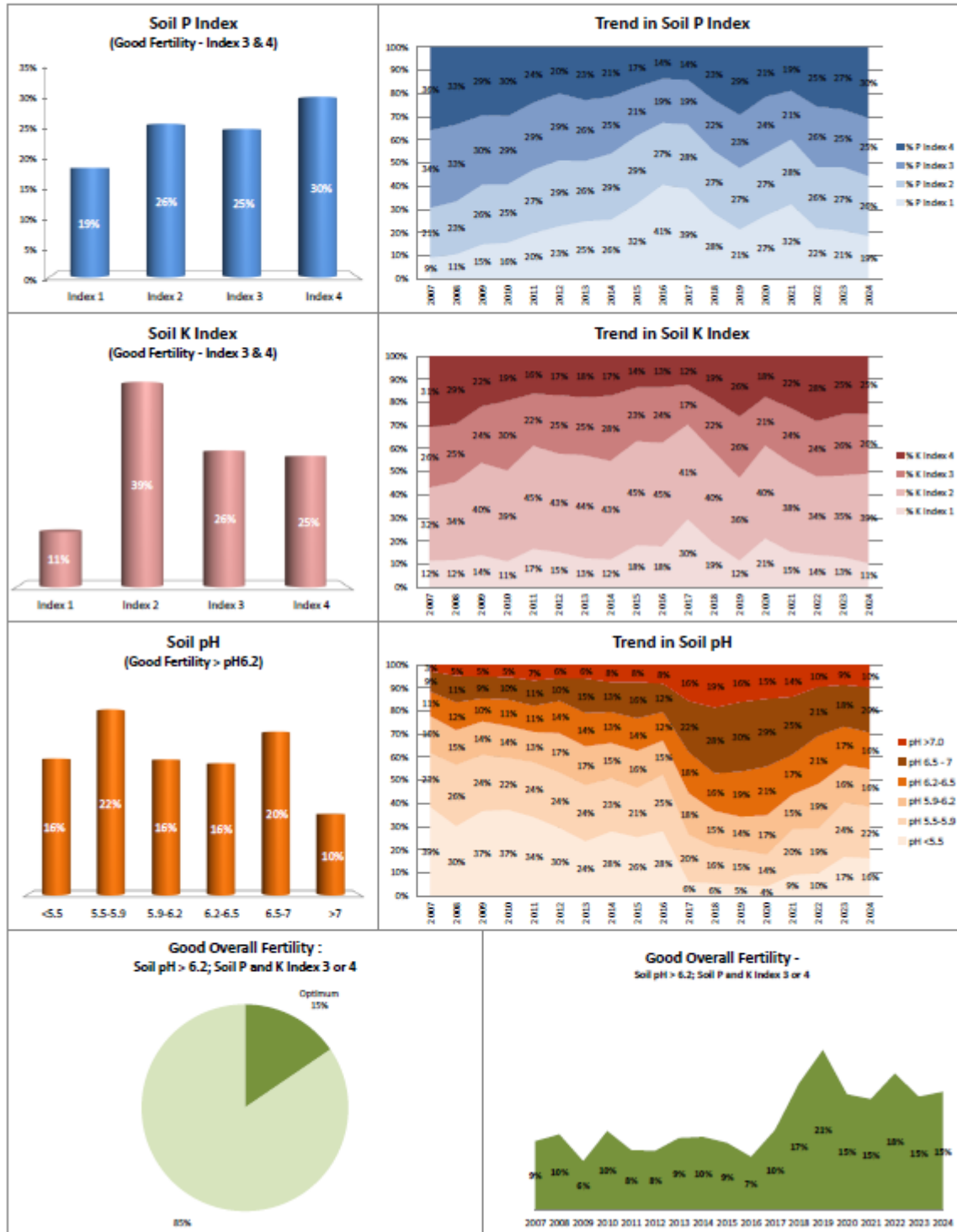
# Limerick soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Limerick
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	4,437

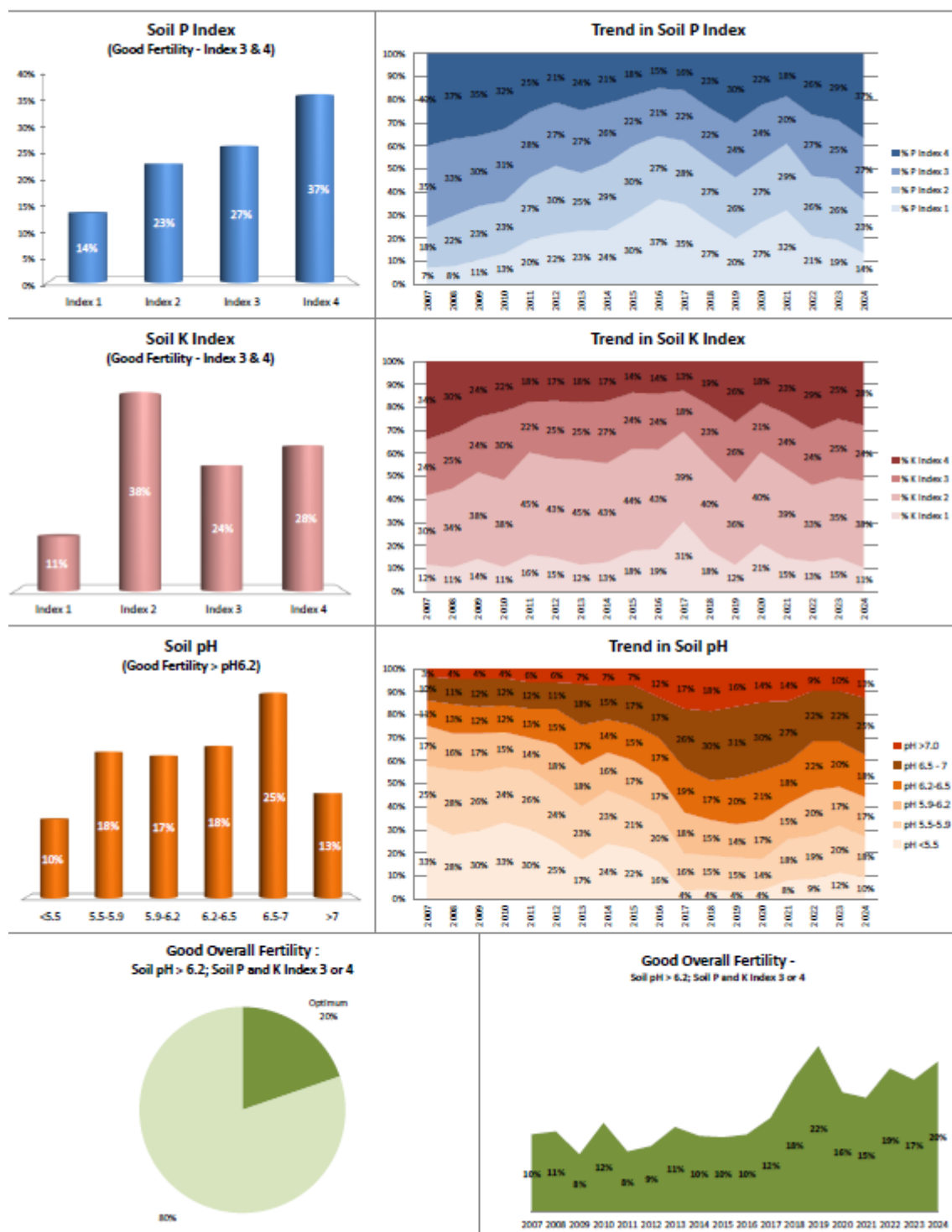


# Dairy



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Limerick
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	2,720

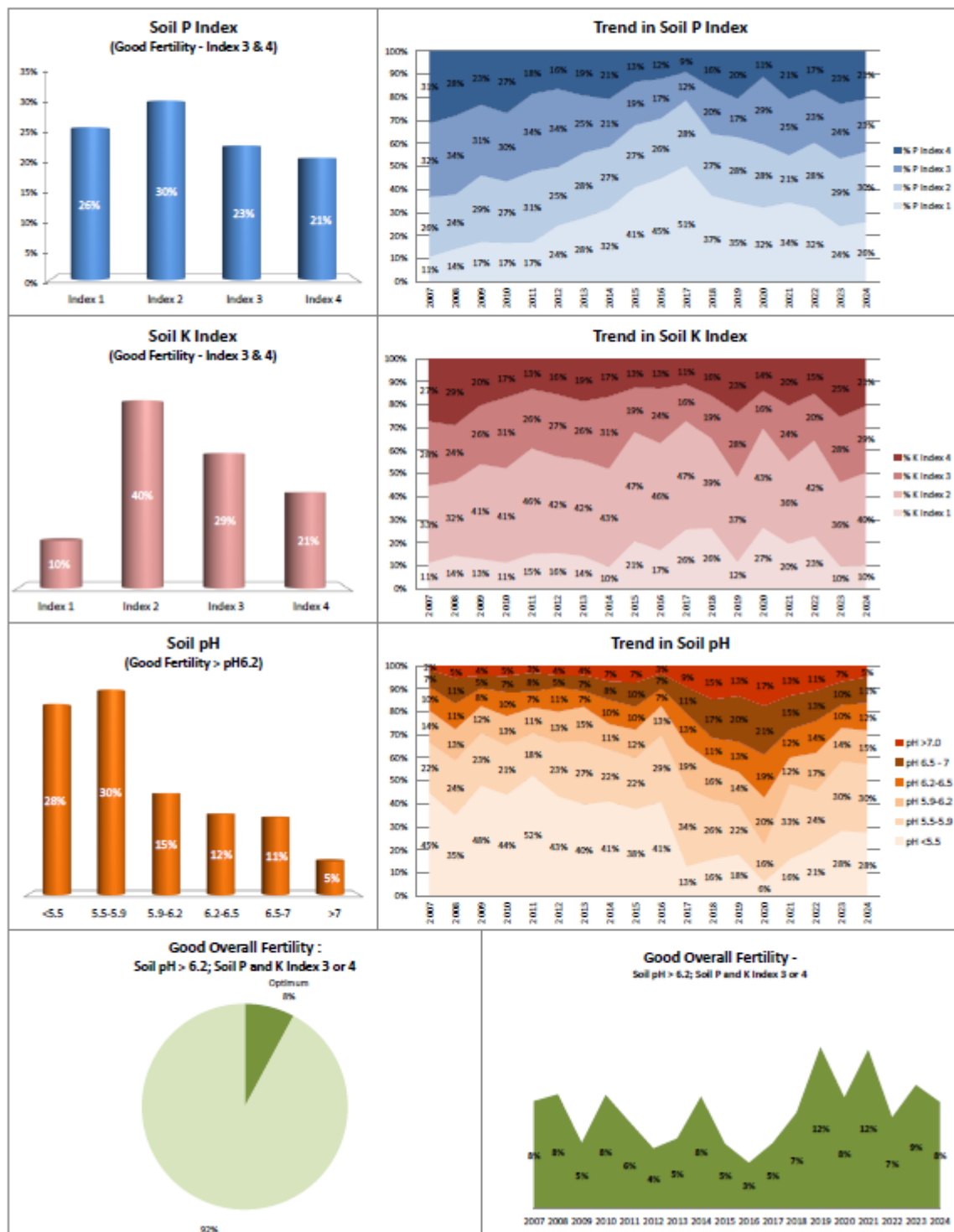


Drystock



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Limerick
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	1,691



Tillage

Insufficient data set available

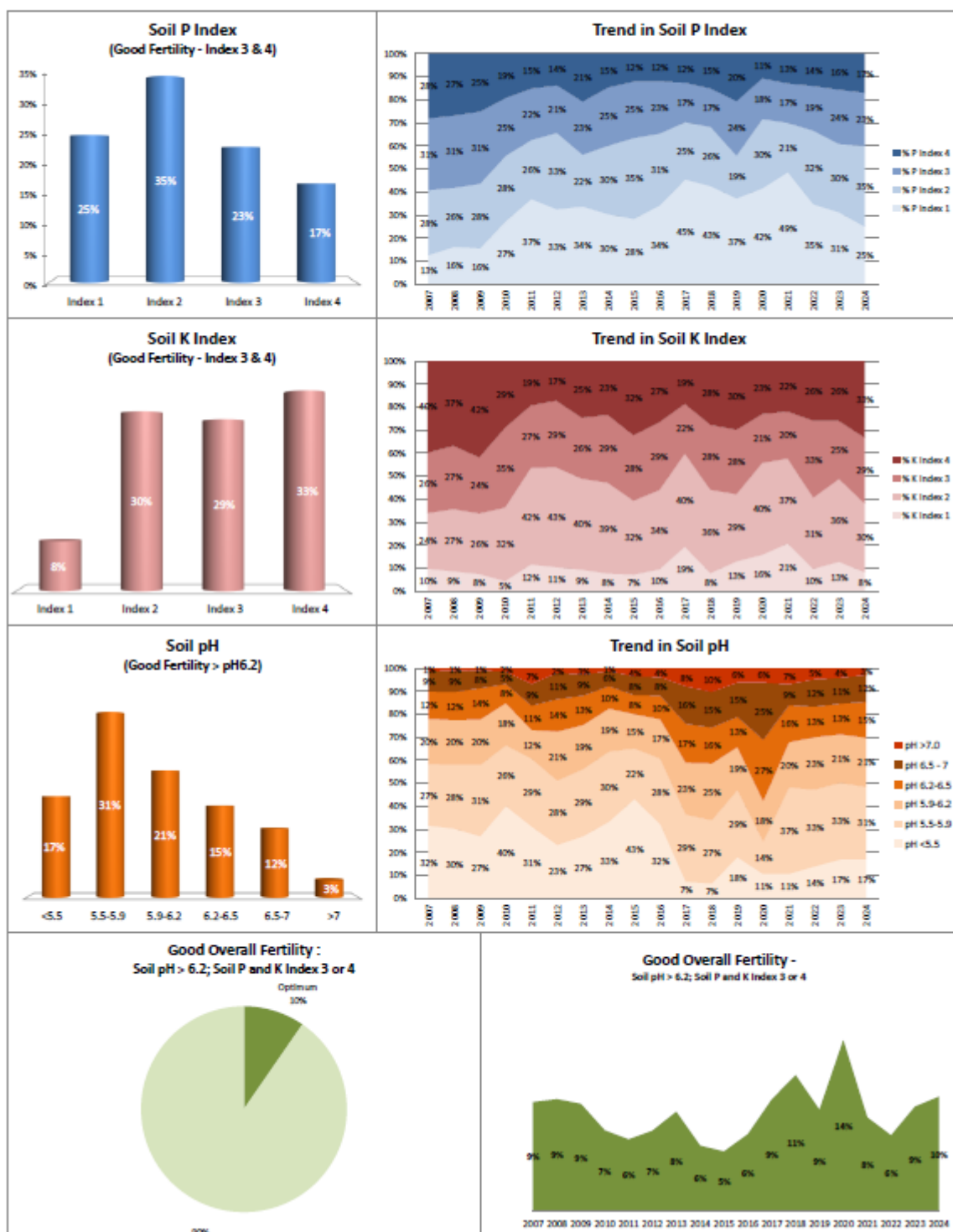
# Longford soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Longford
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	1,149



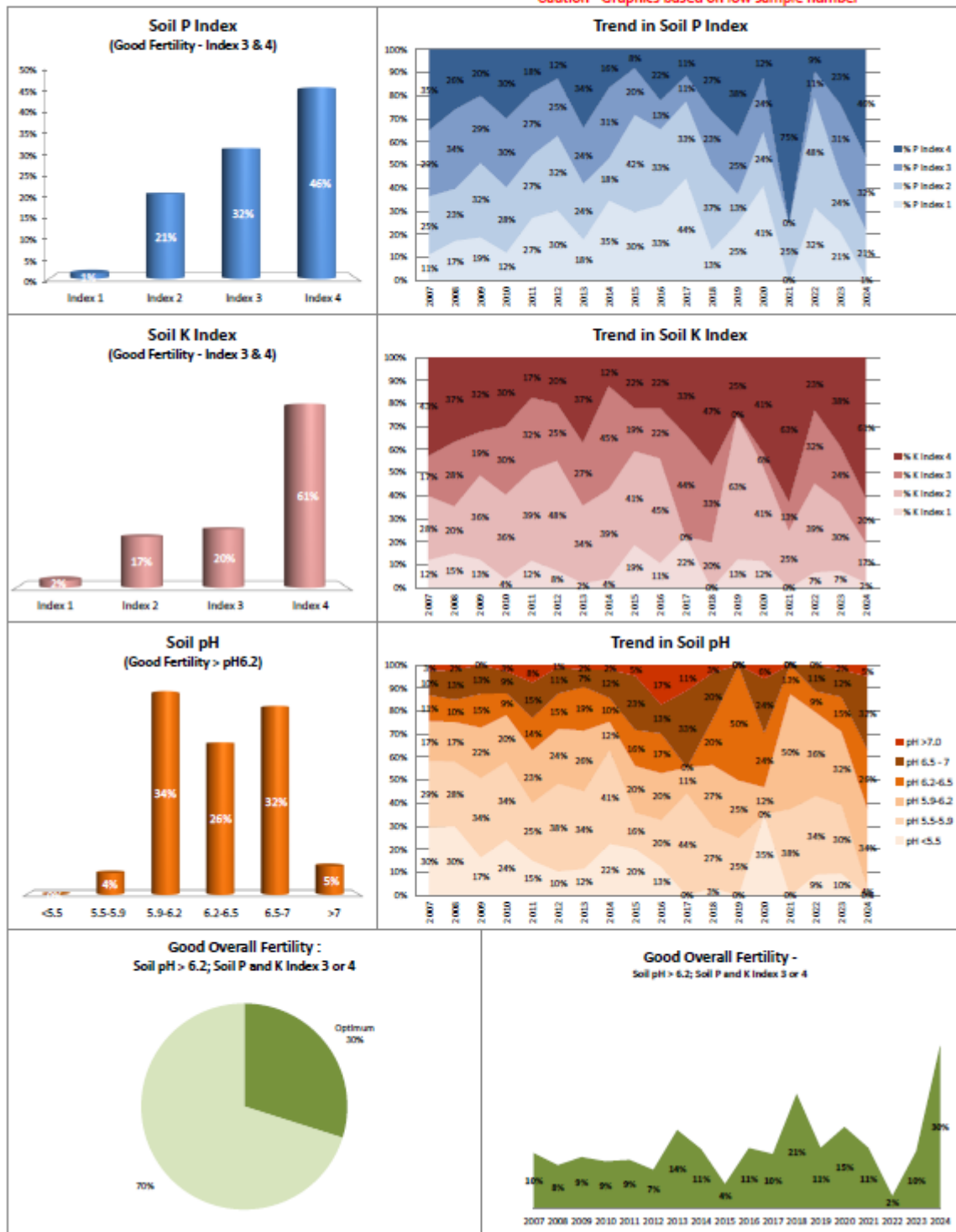
# Dairy



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

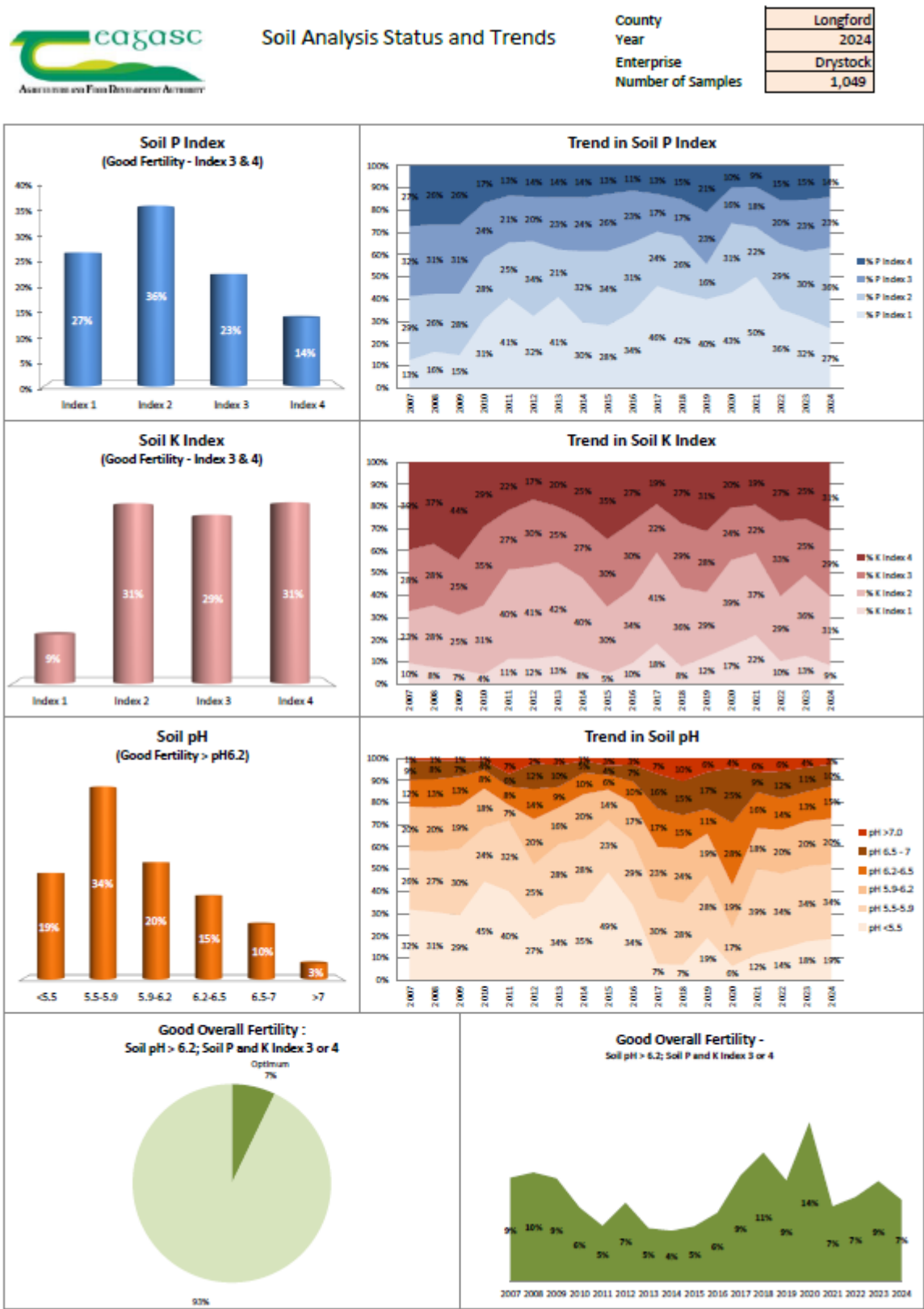
County	Longford
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	82

Caution - Graphics based on low sample number





Drystock



Tillage

Insufficient data set available



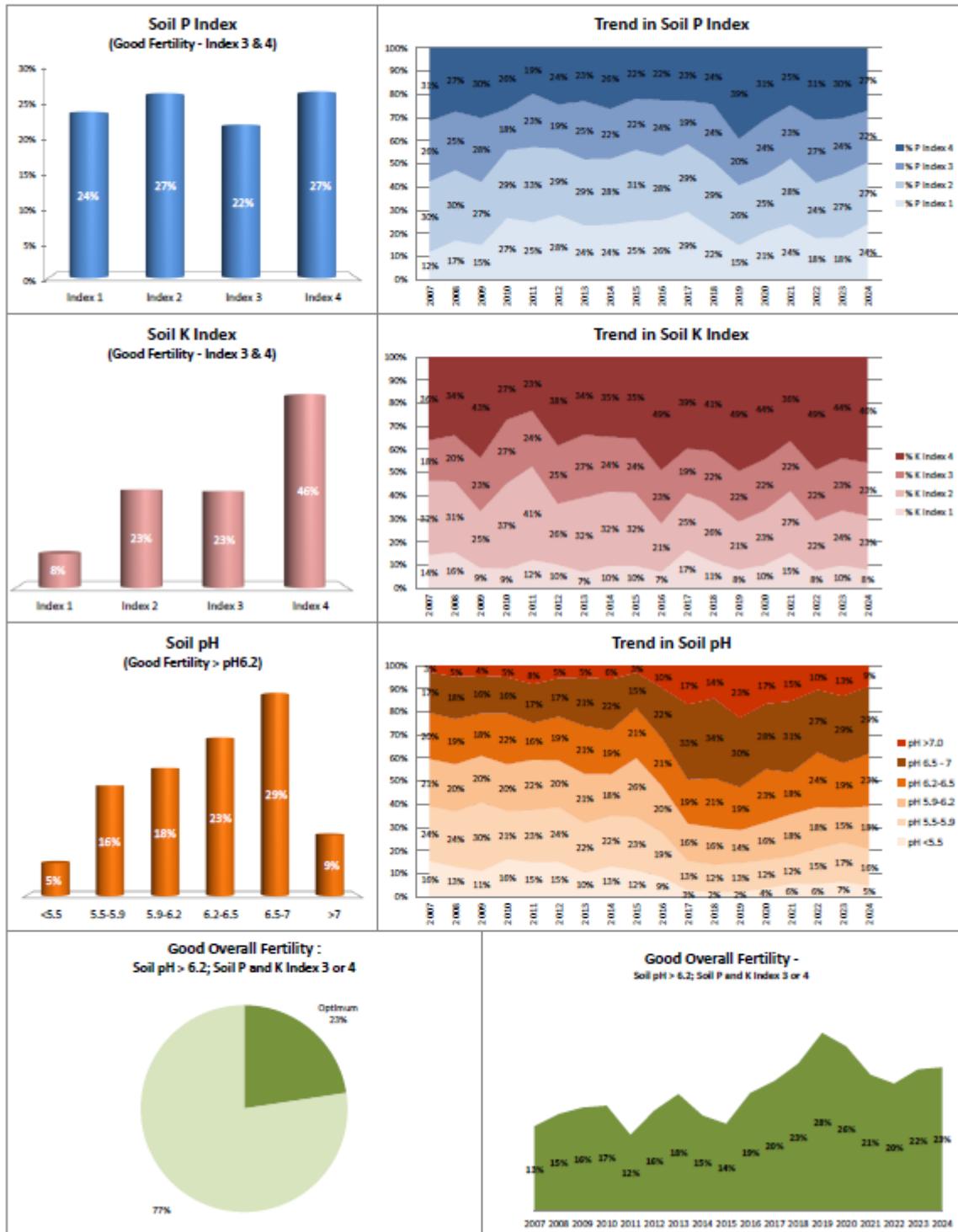
# Louth soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Louth
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	1,479

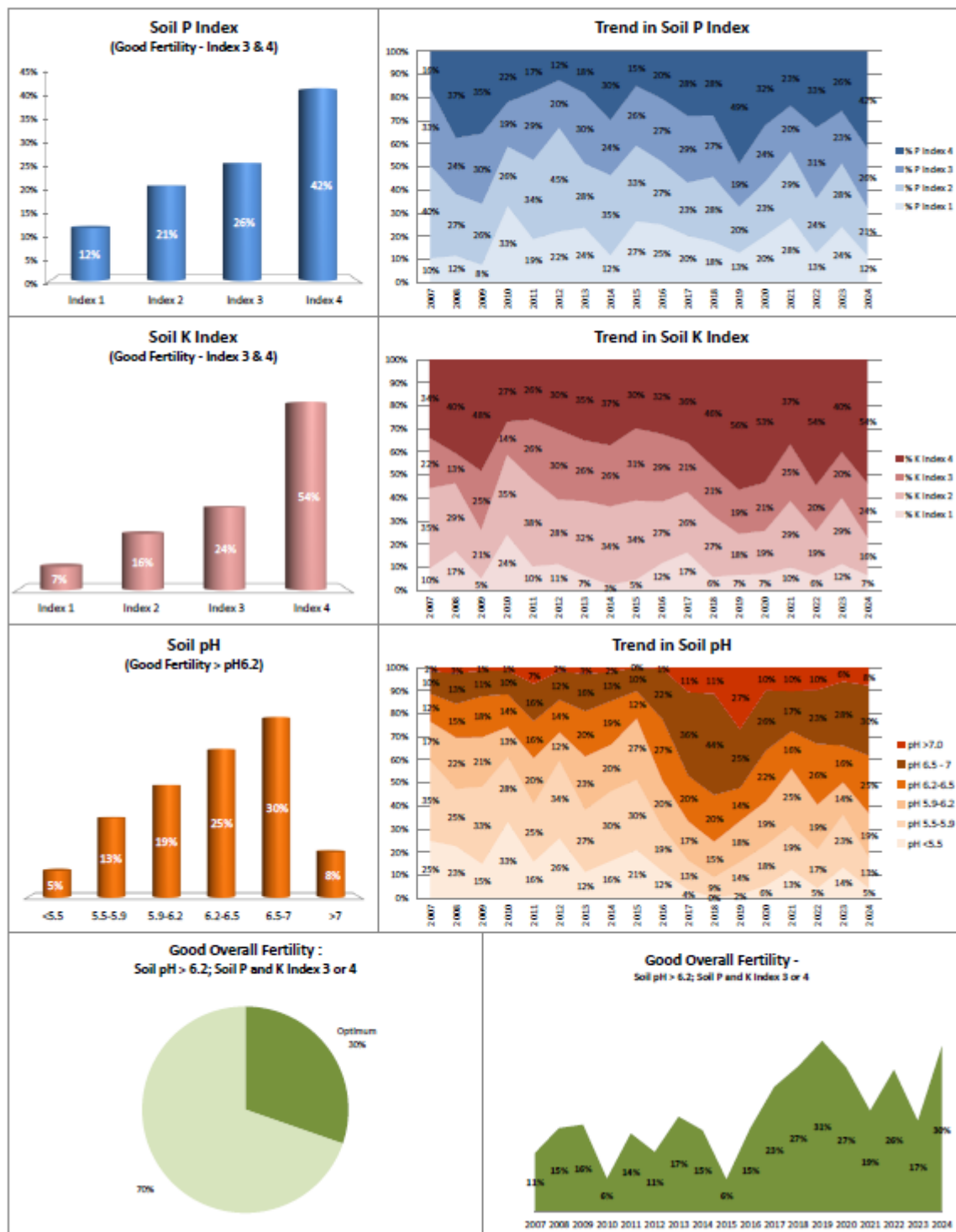


# Dairy



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Louth
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	525

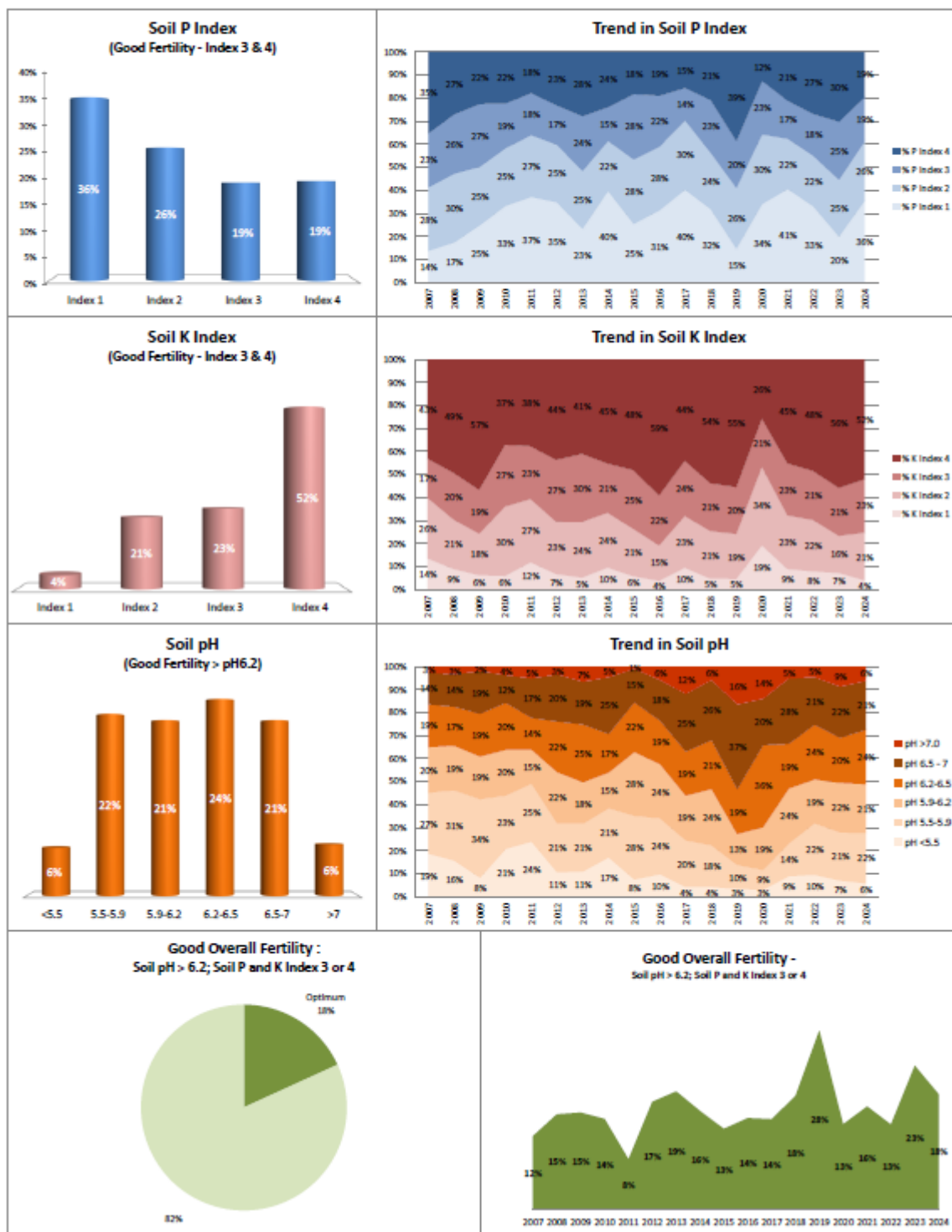


Drystock



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Louth
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	560

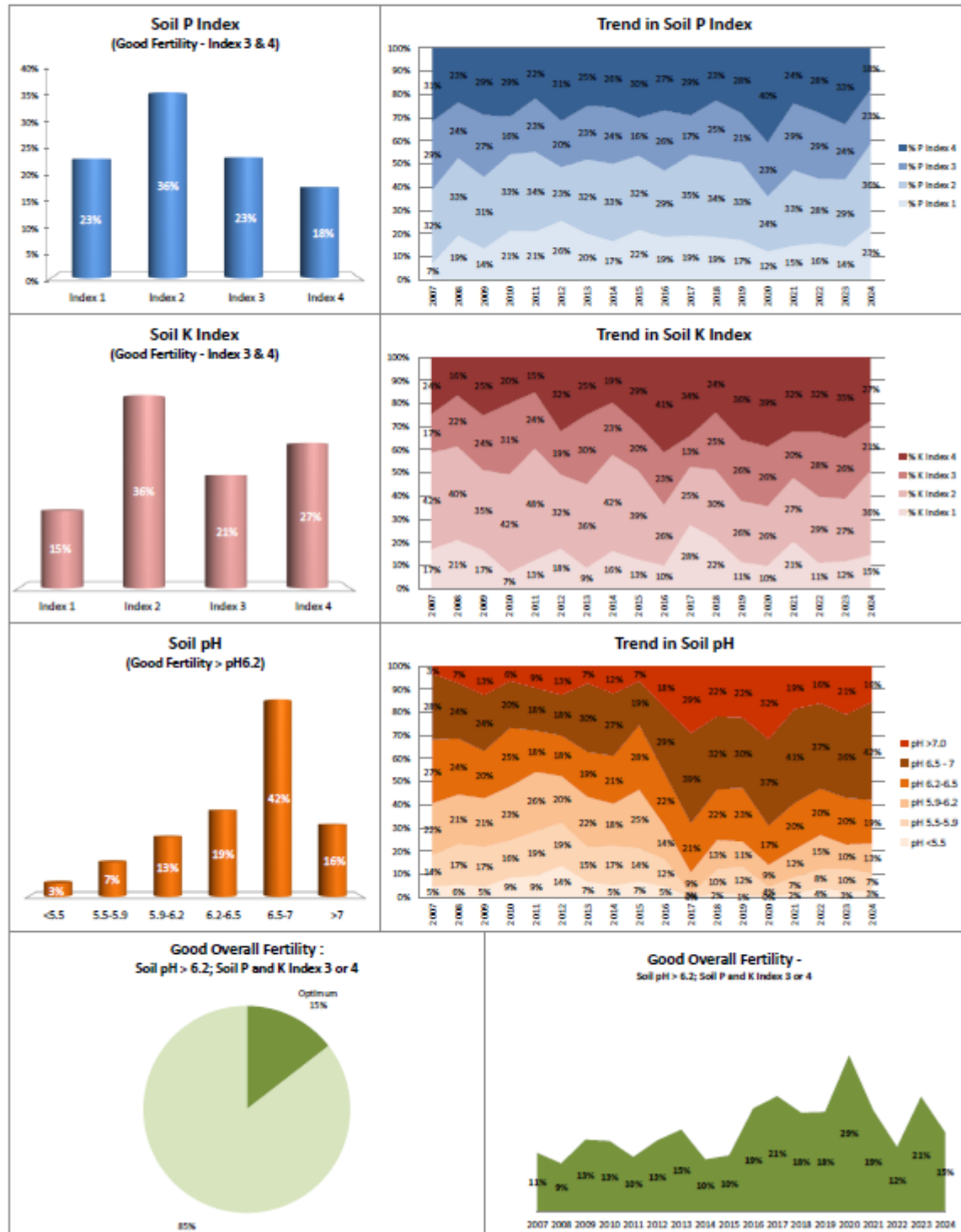


## Tillage



### Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Louth
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	346



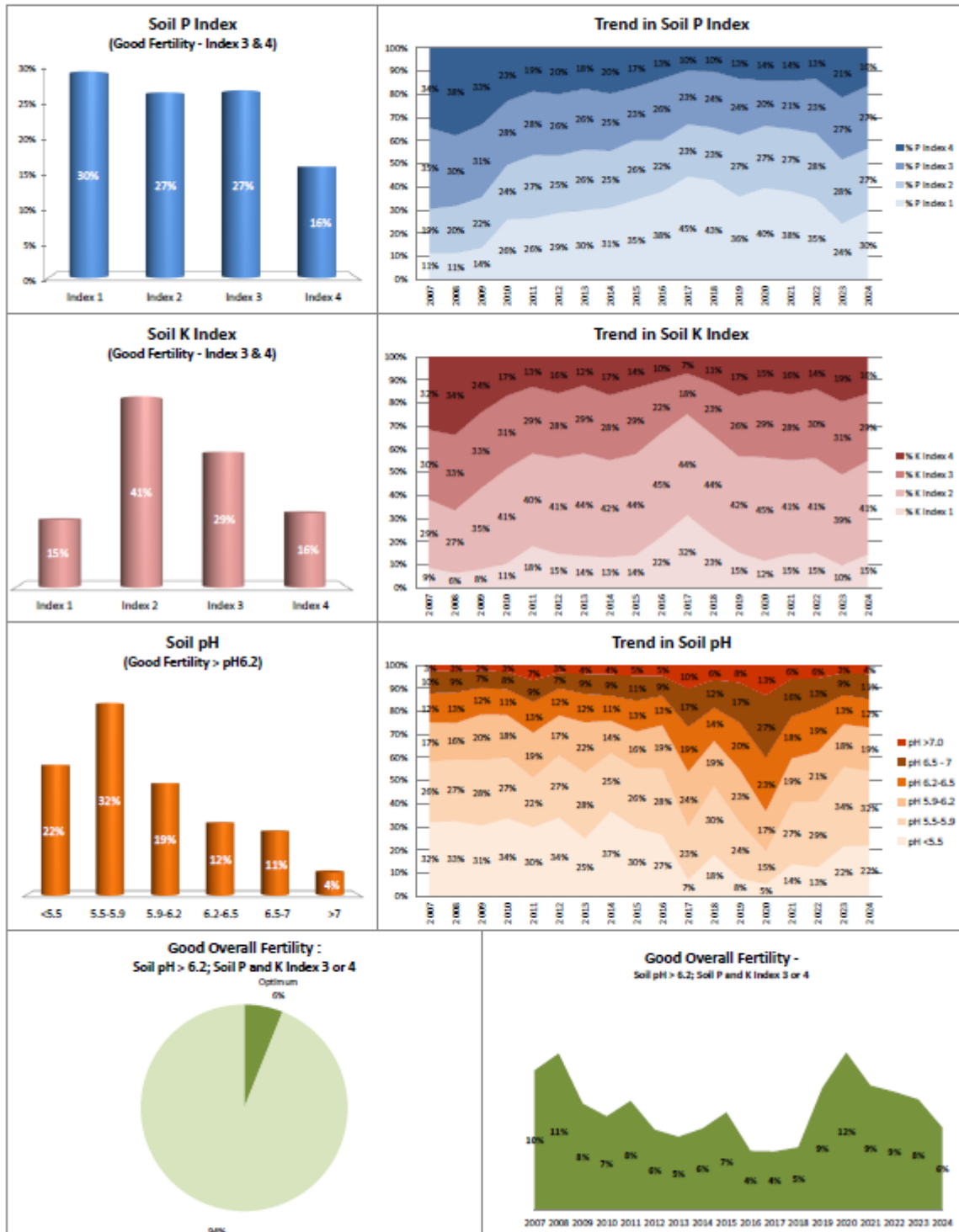
# Mayo soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Mayo
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	5,951

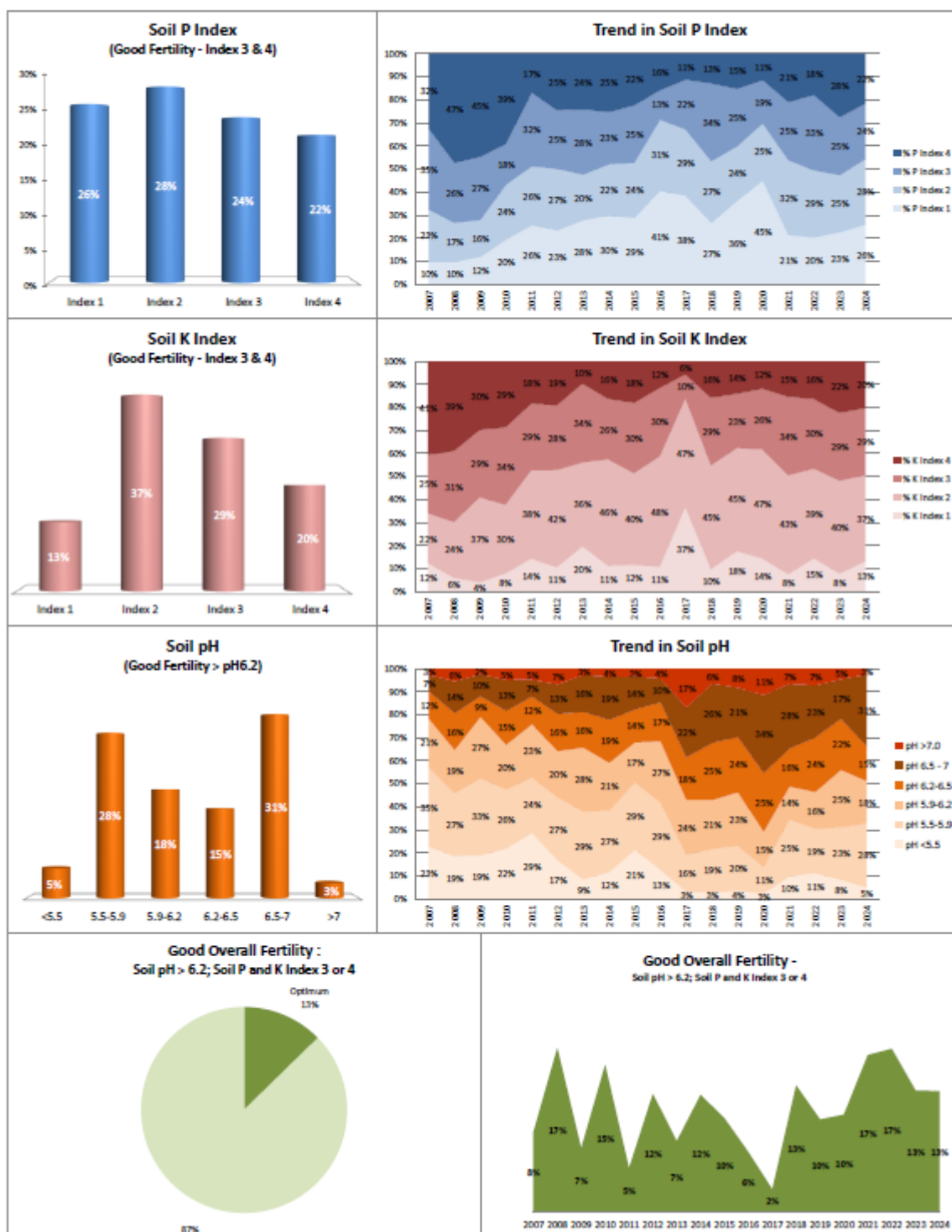


# Dairy



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Mayo
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	158

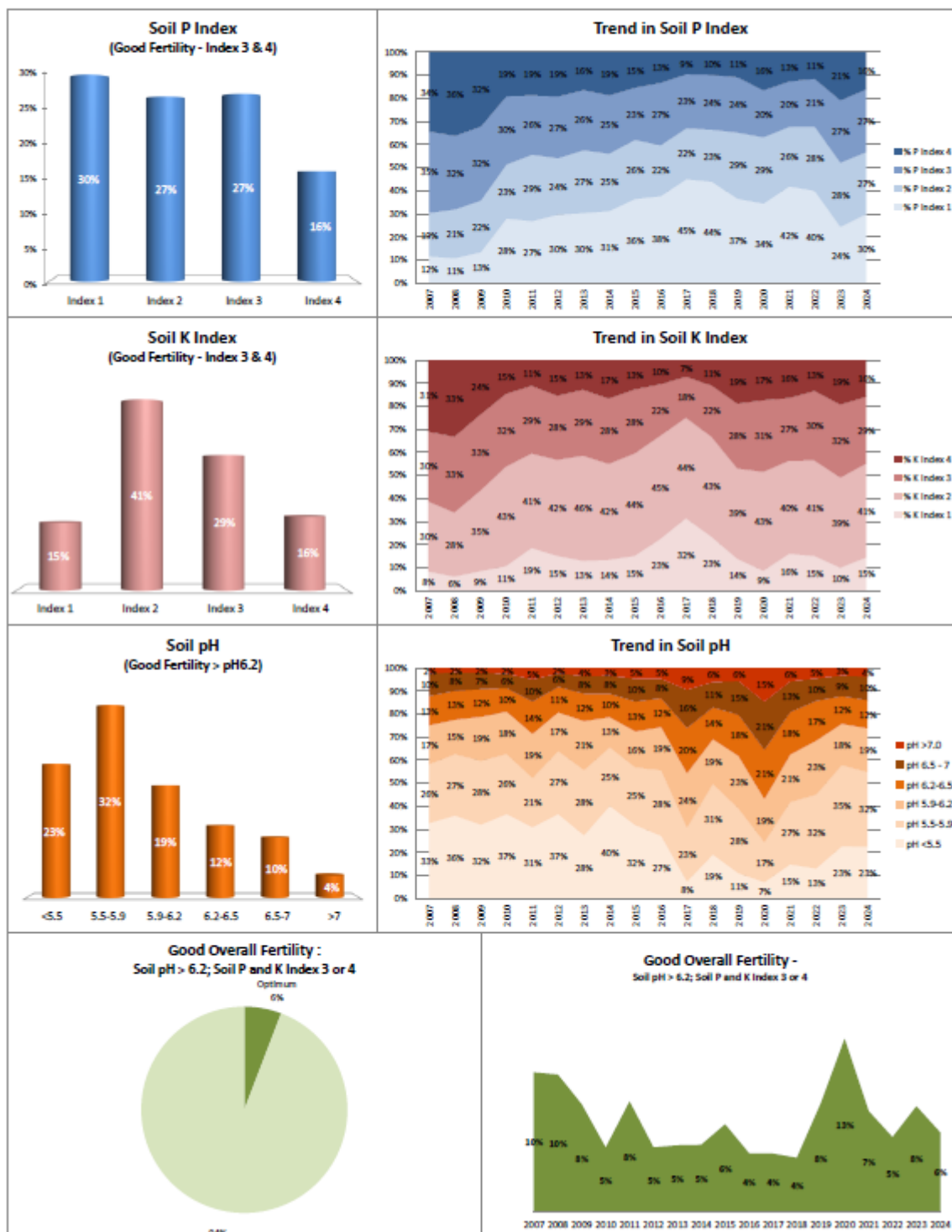


Drystock



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Mayo
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	5,771



Tillage

Insufficient data set available



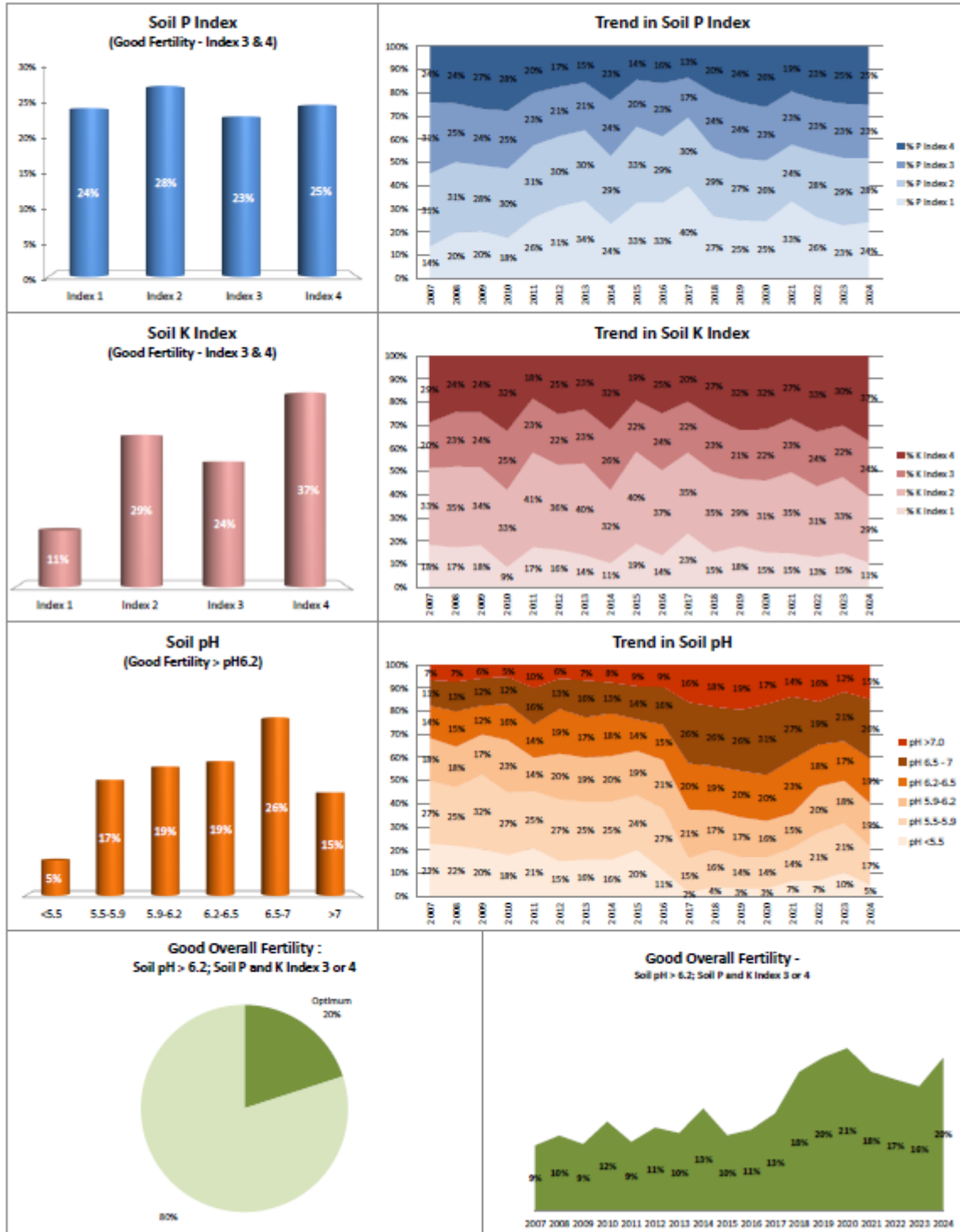
# Meath soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Meath
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	3,254



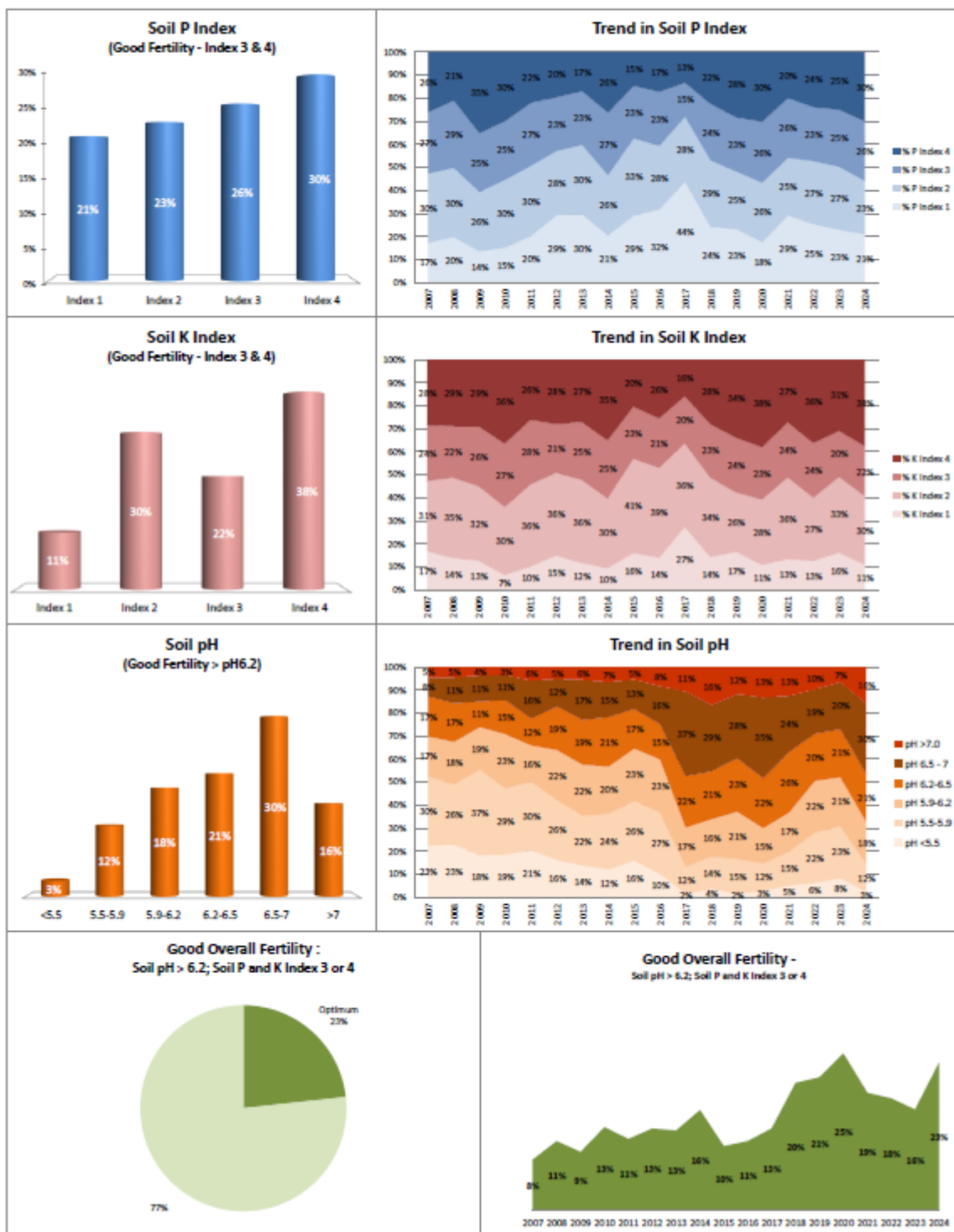


Dairy



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

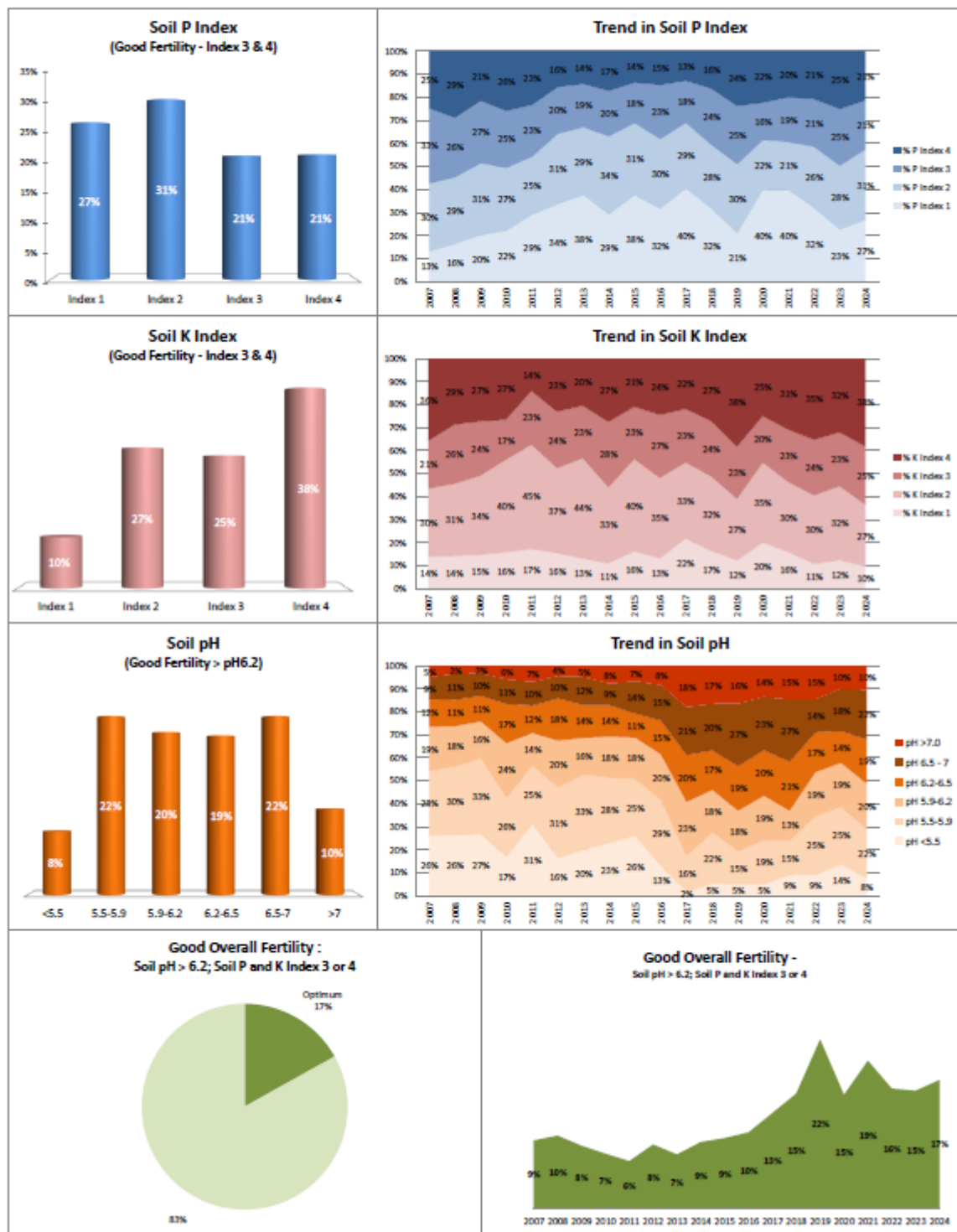
County	Meath
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	1,361





## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Meath
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	1,625

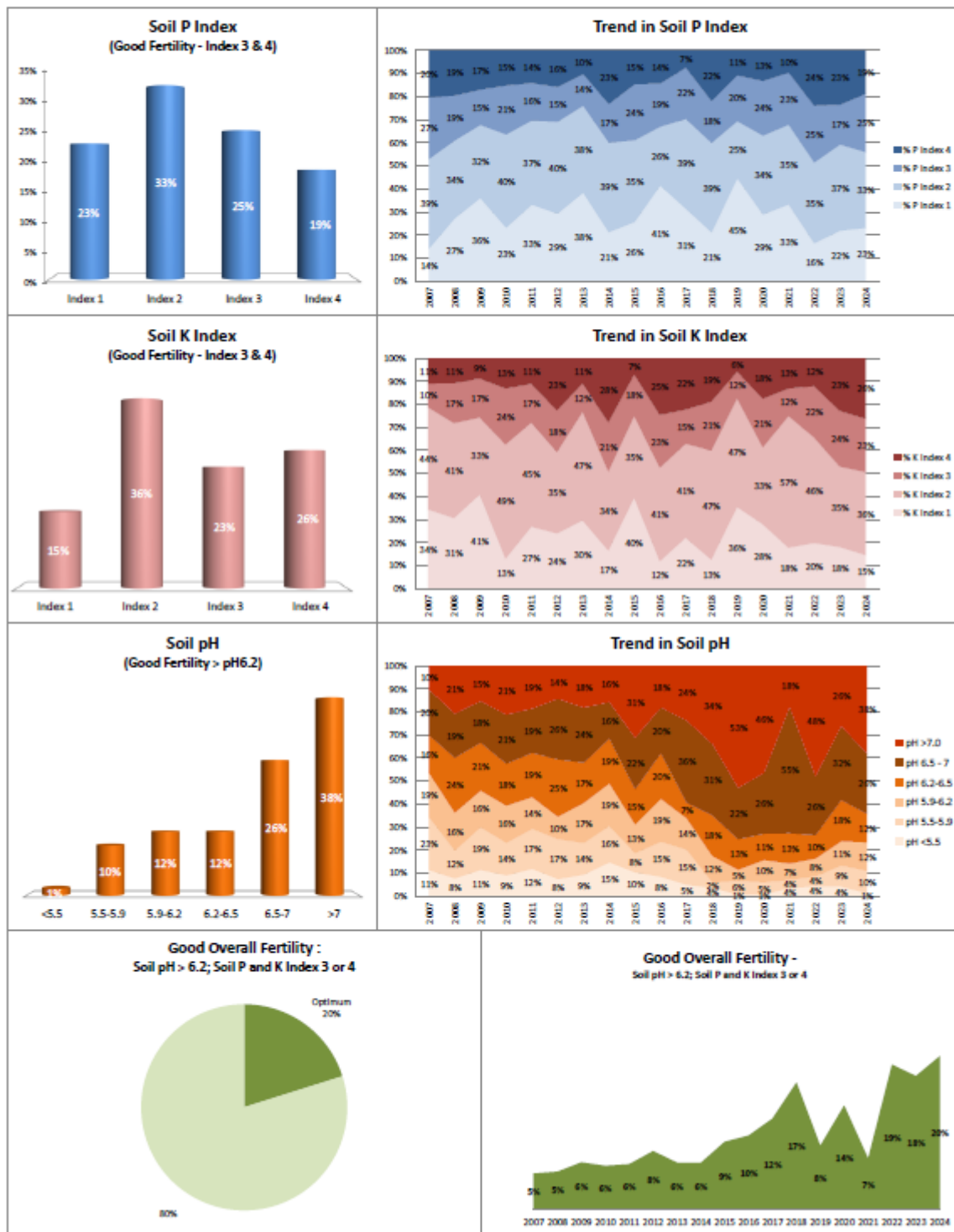


## Tillage



### Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Meath
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	225



# Monaghan soil fertility results 2024

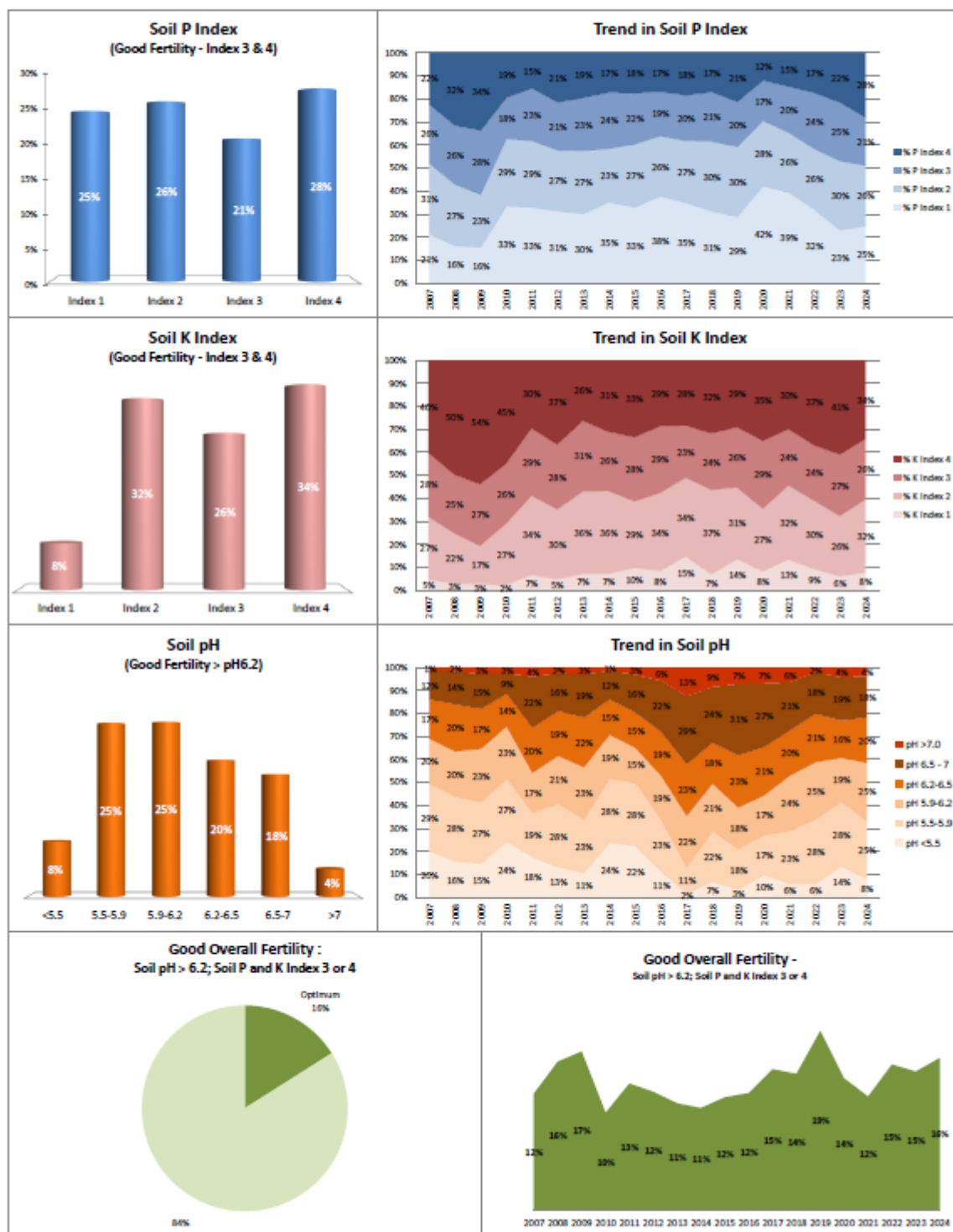
All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County  
Year  
Enterprise  
Number of Samples

Monaghan
2024
All Farms
1,288

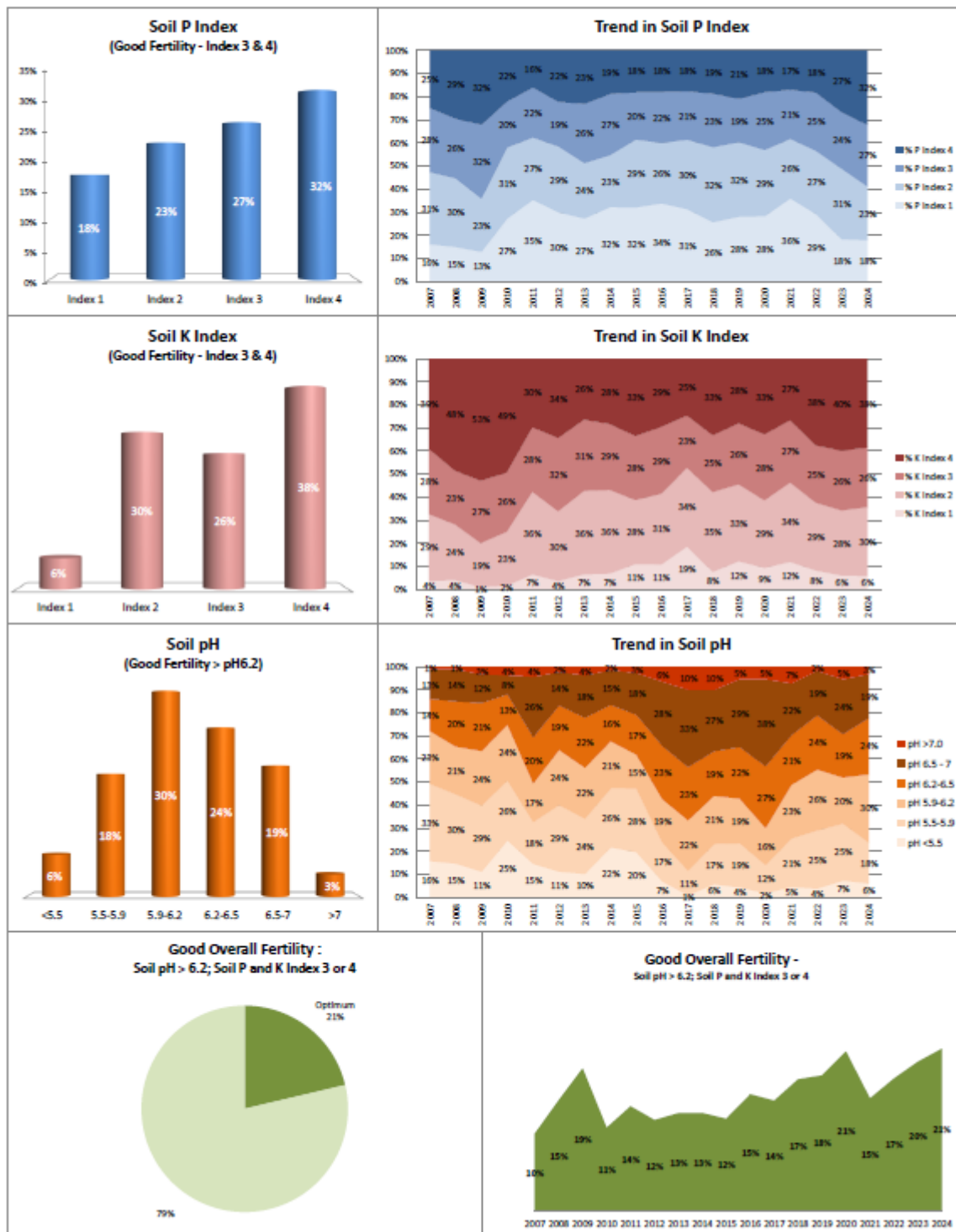


# Dairy



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Monaghan
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	554

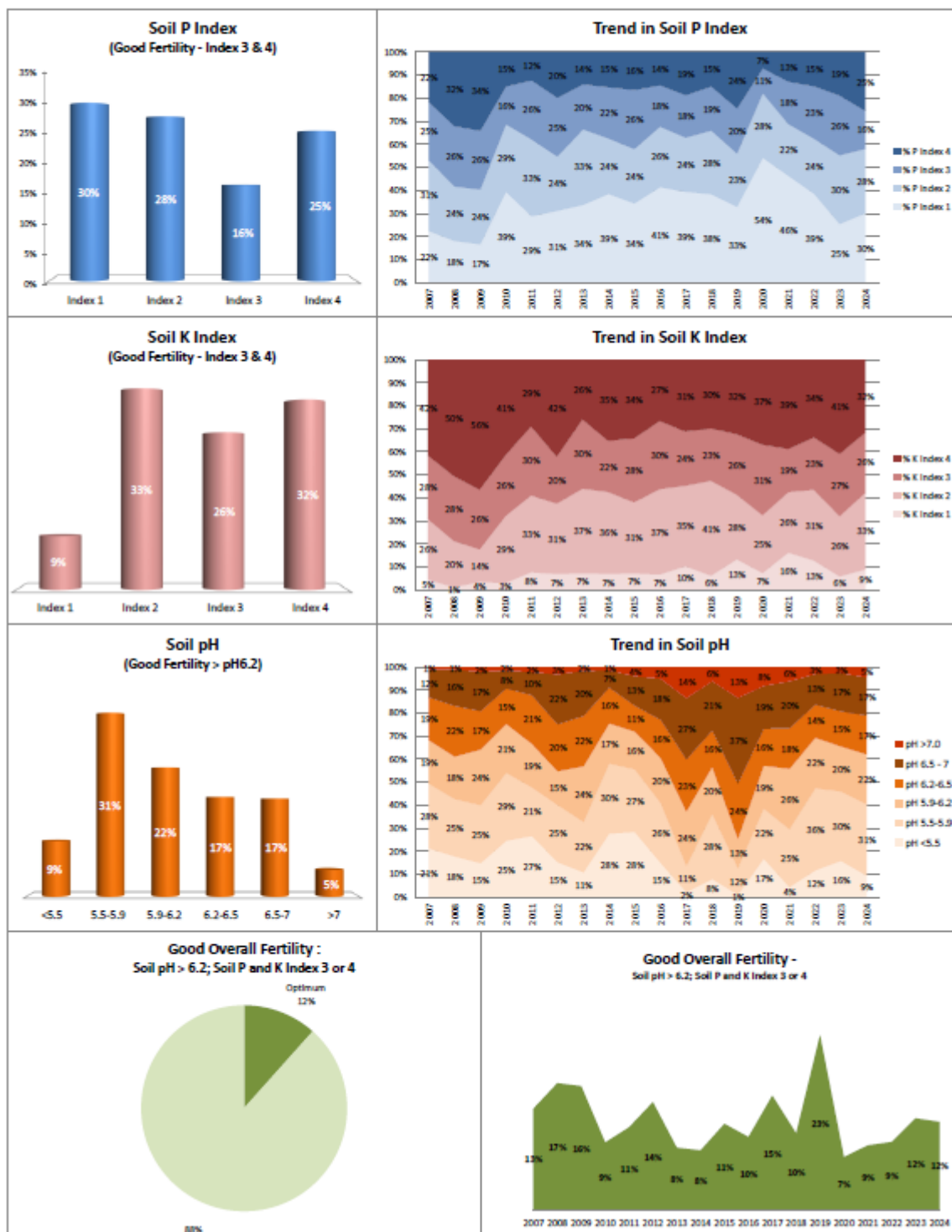


Drystock



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Monaghan
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	702

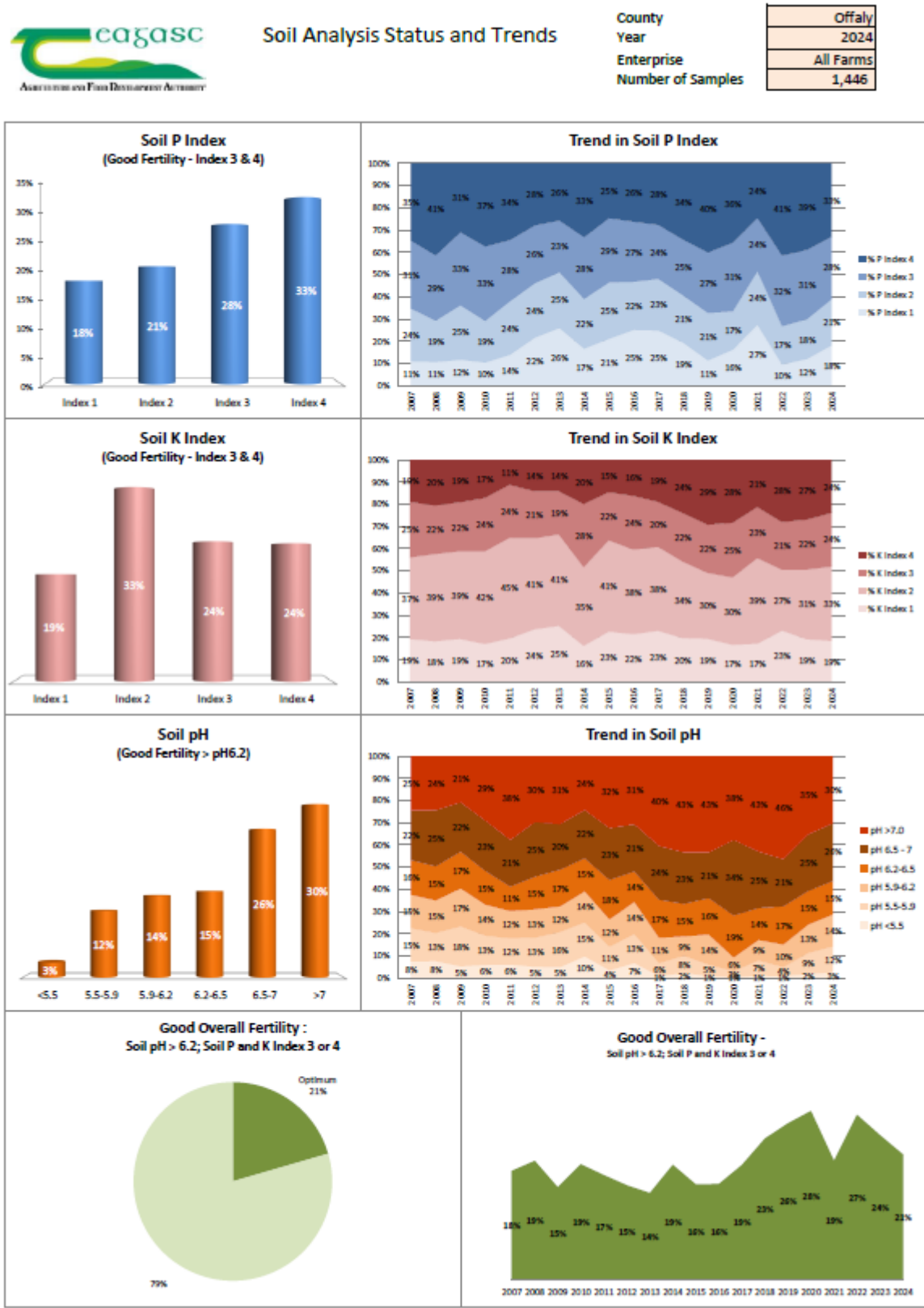


Tillage

Insufficient data set available

# Offaly soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises

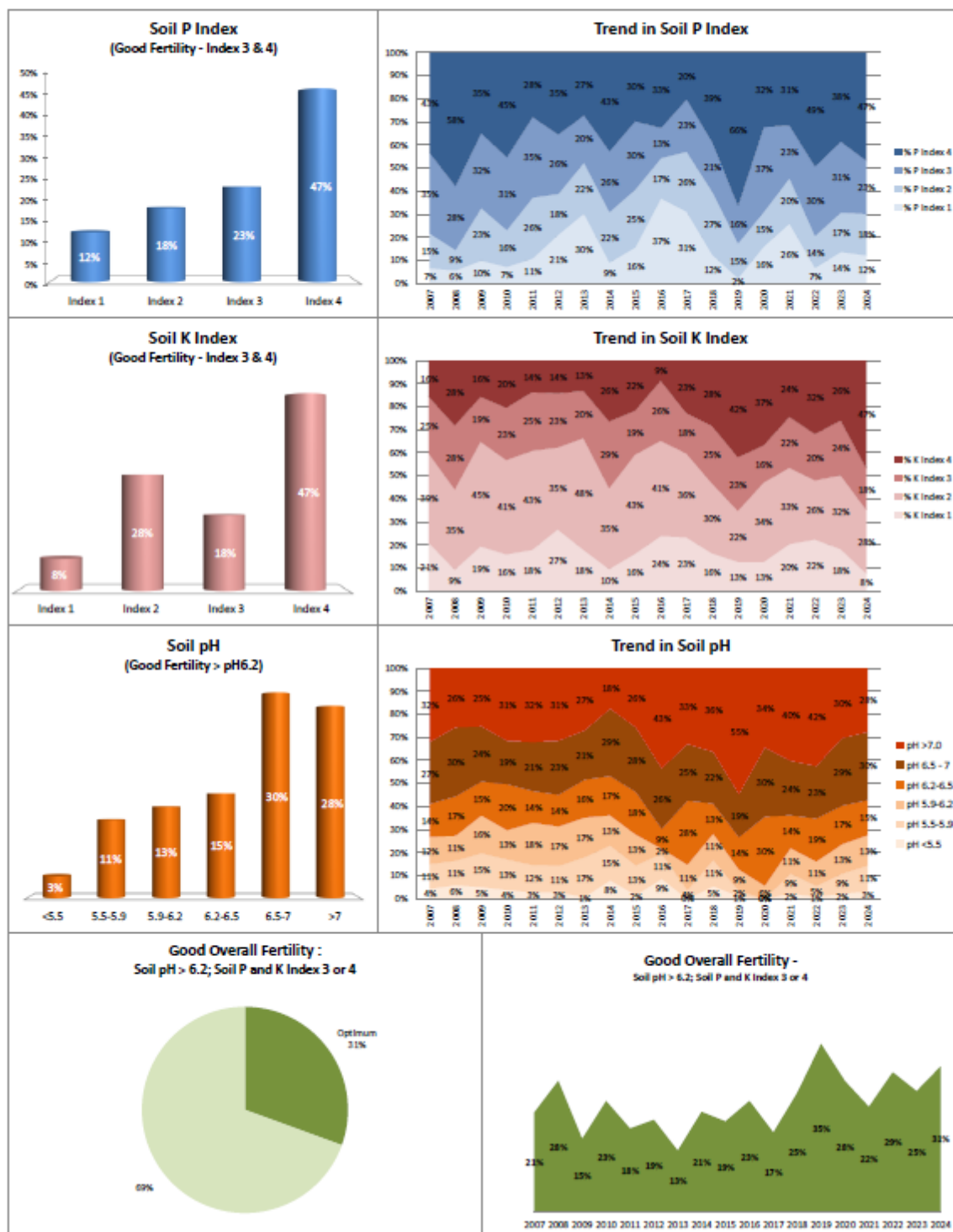


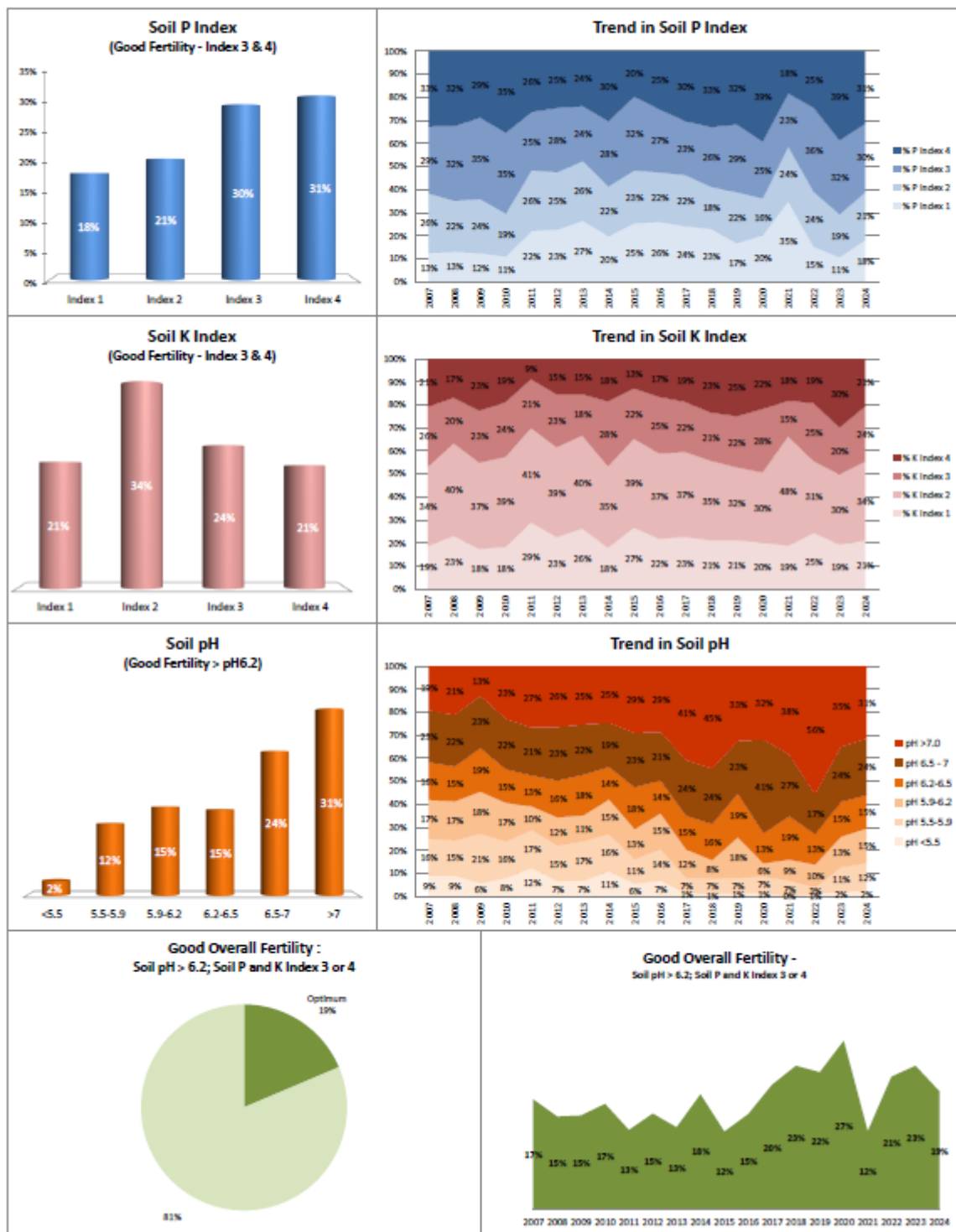




## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Offaly
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	156





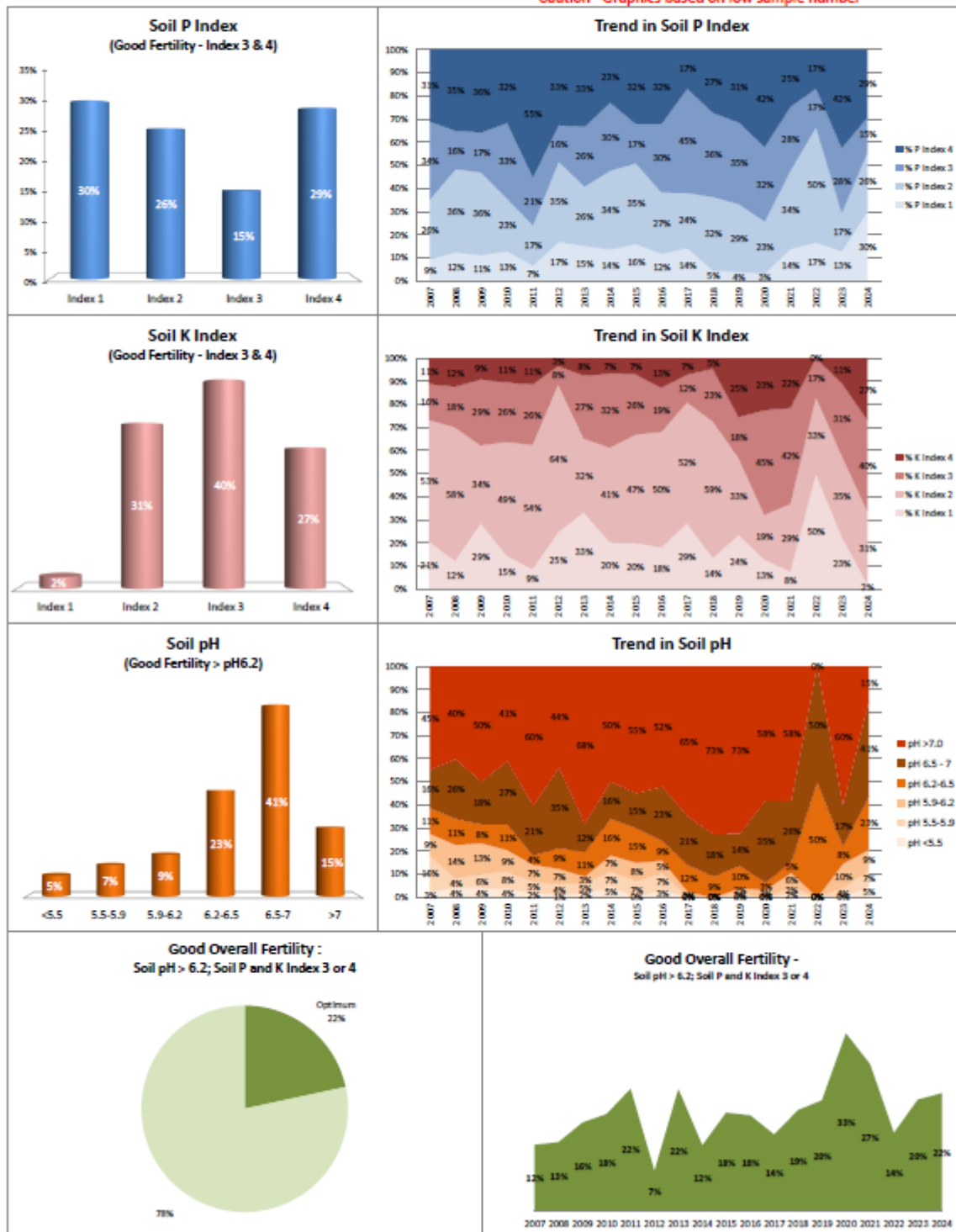
# Tillage



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Offaly
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	86

Caution - Graphics based on low sample number



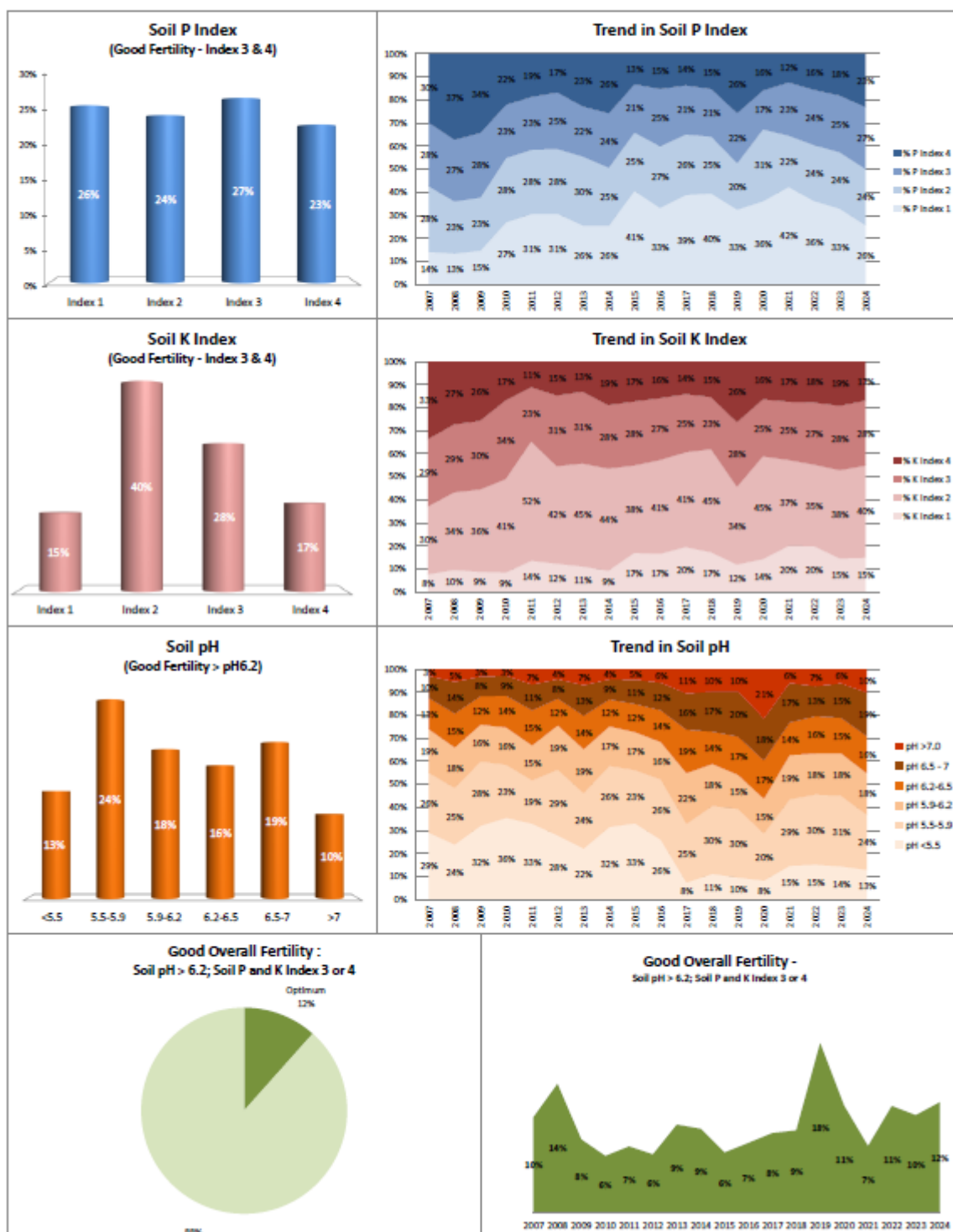
# Roscommon soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Roscommon
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	4,189



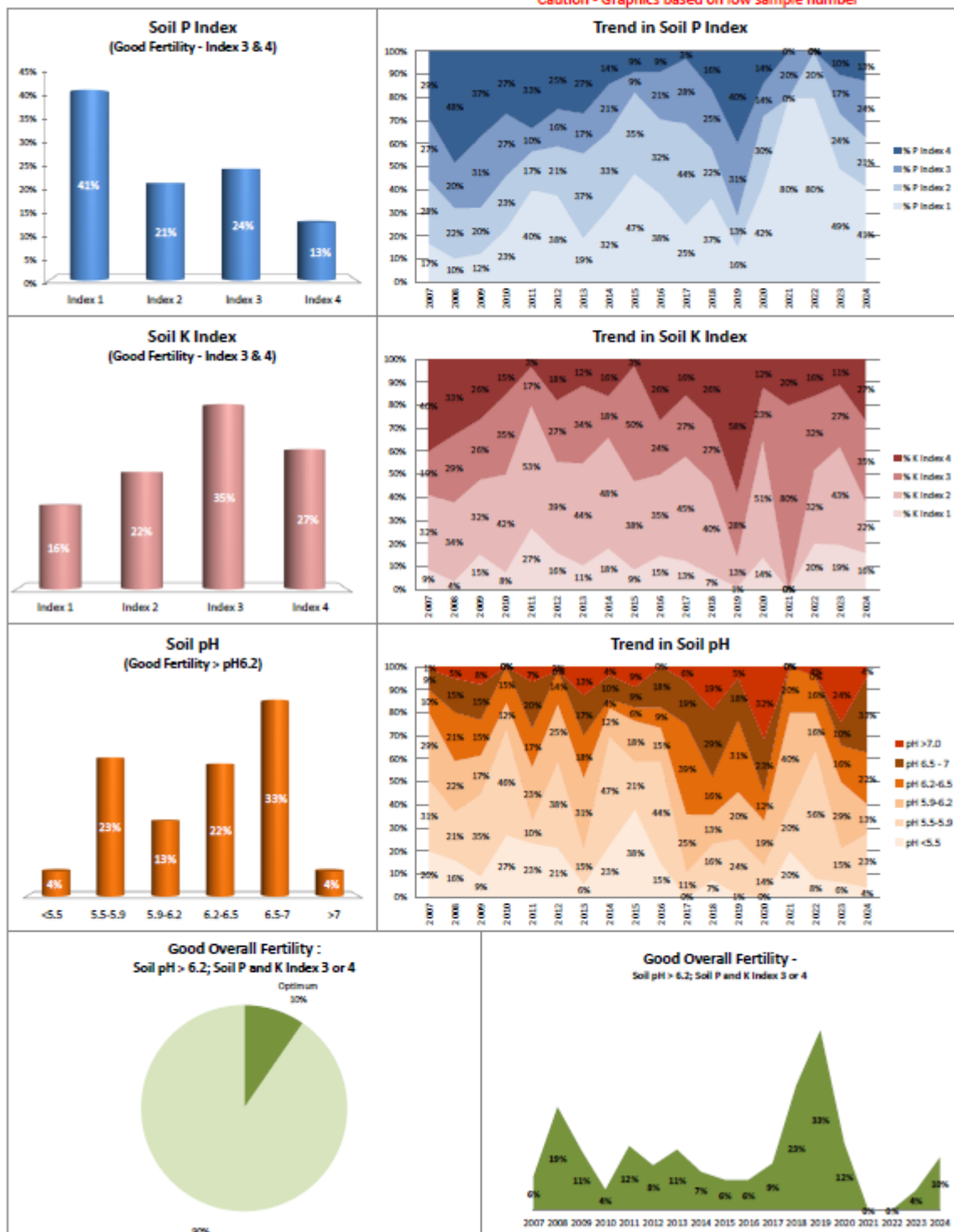
# Dairy



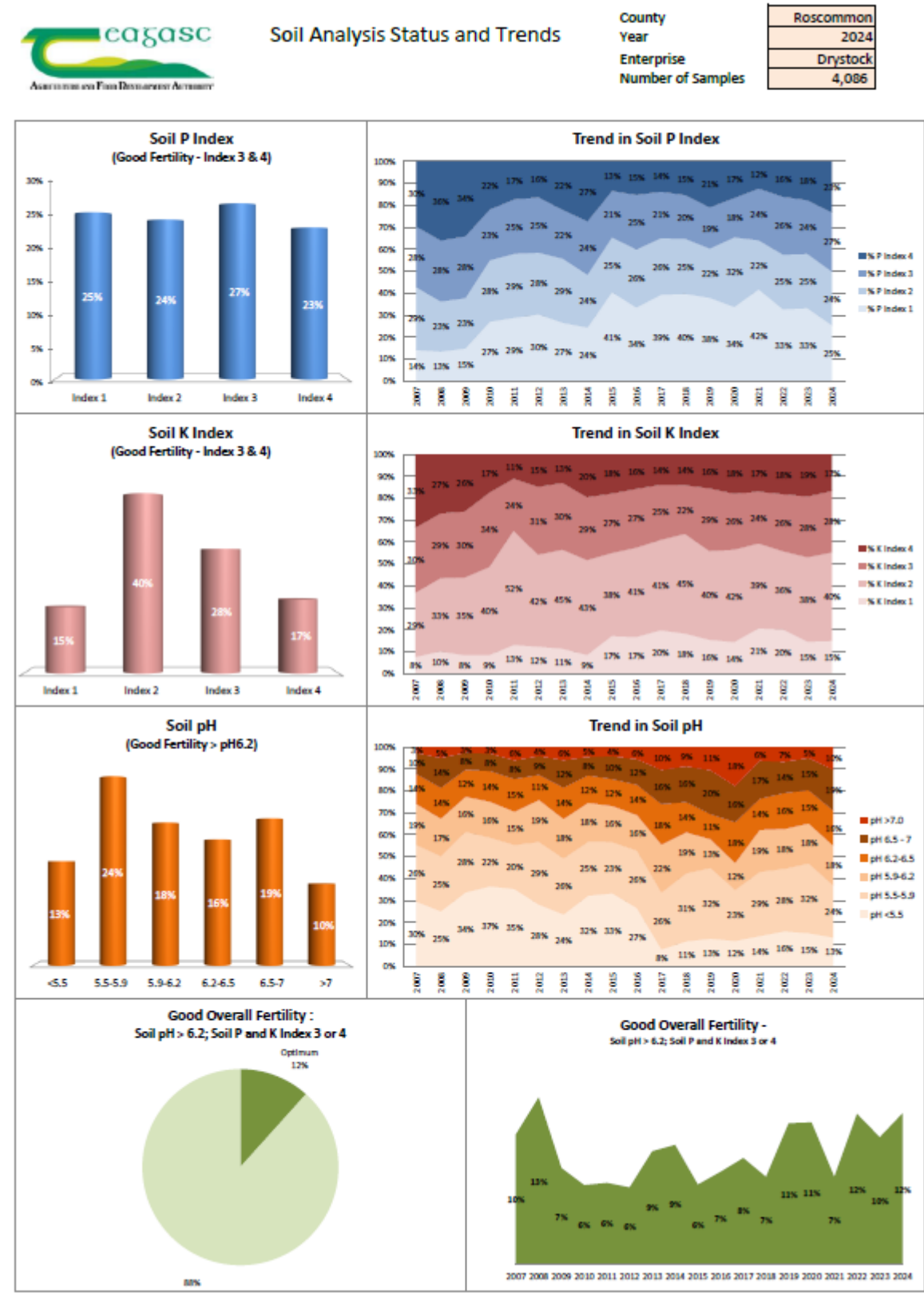
## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Roscommon
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	94

Caution - Graphics based on low sample number



Drystock



Tillage

Insufficient data set available

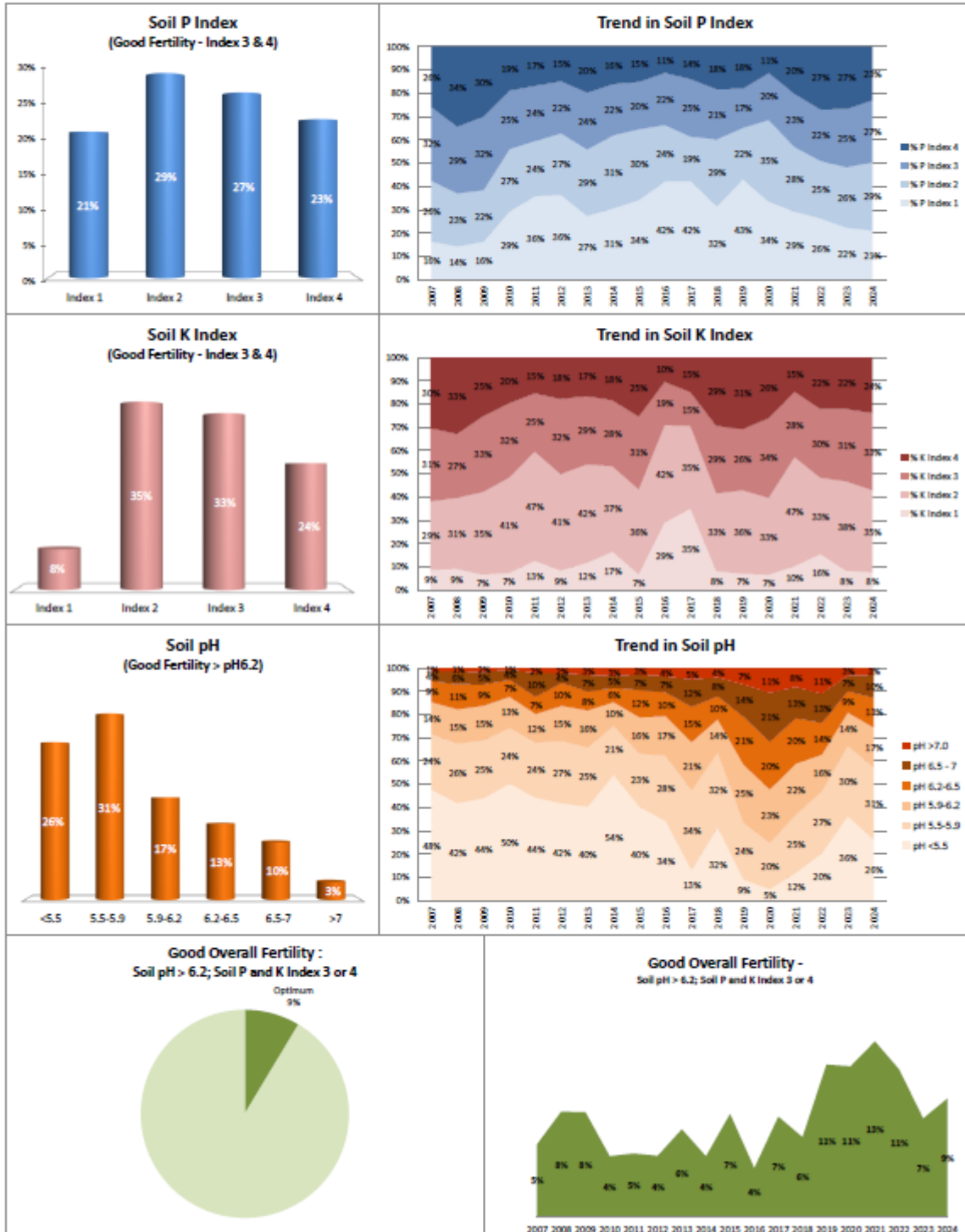
# Sligo soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



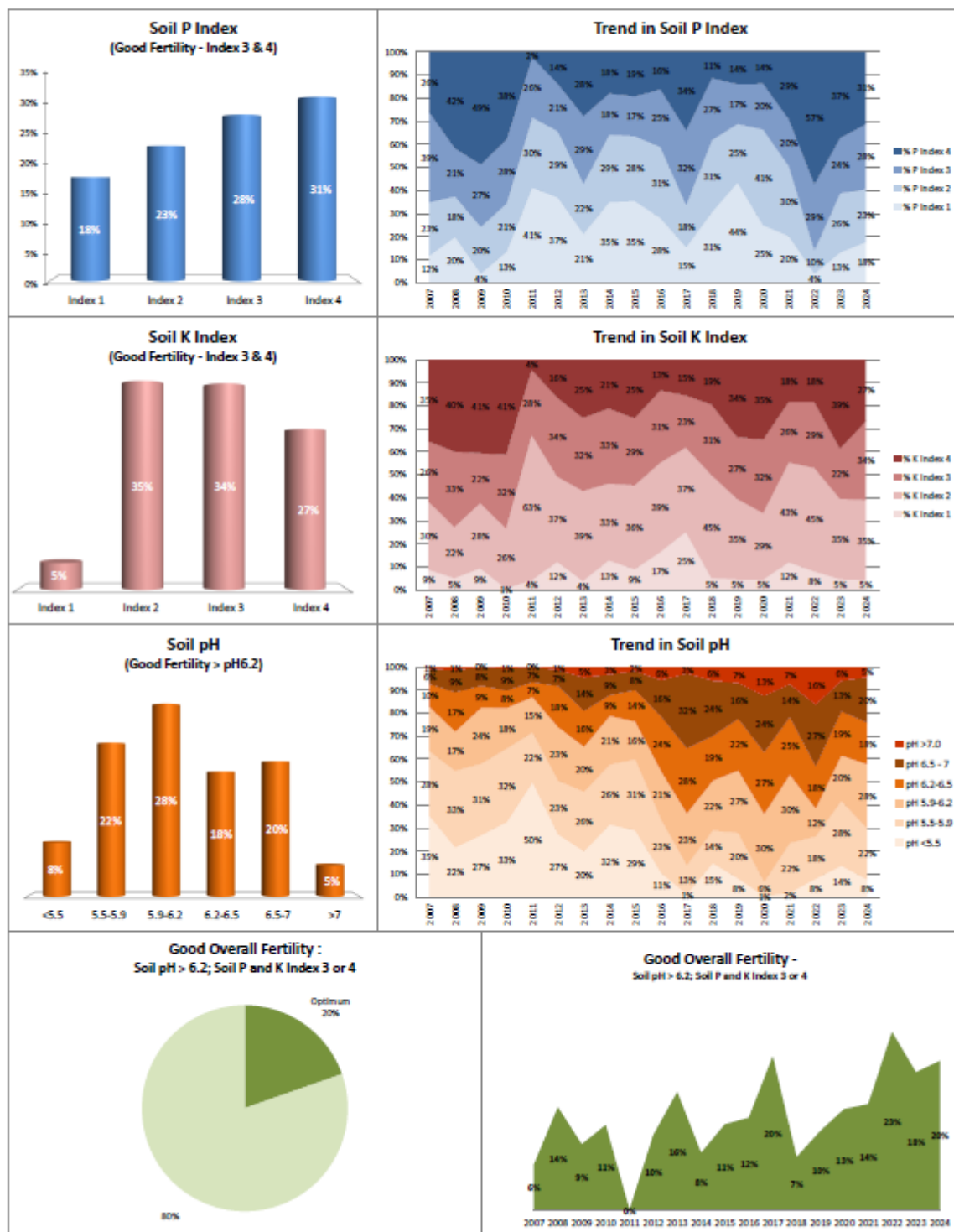
## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Sligo
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	2,257

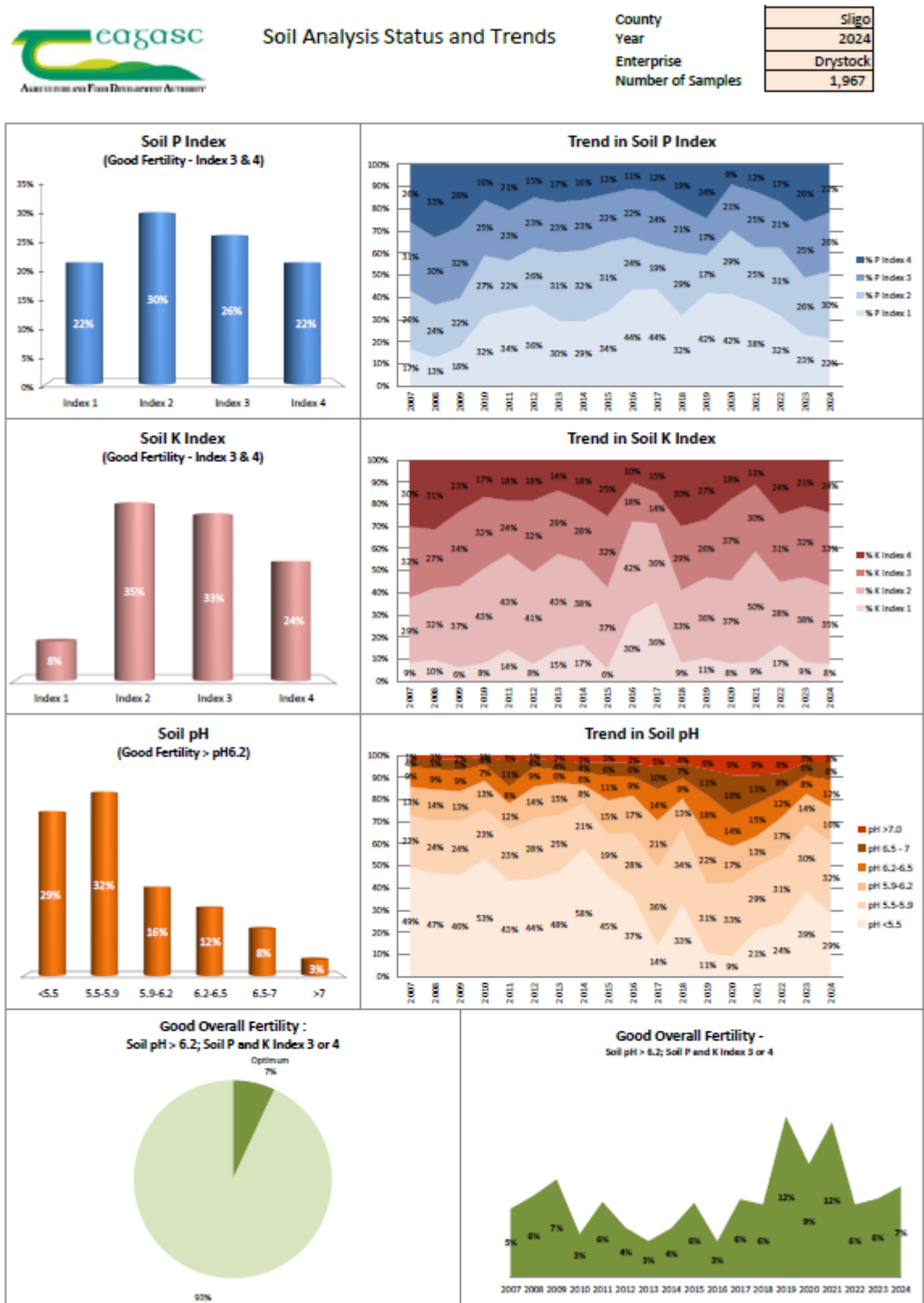




County	Sligo
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	266



Drystock



Tillage  
Insufficient data set available

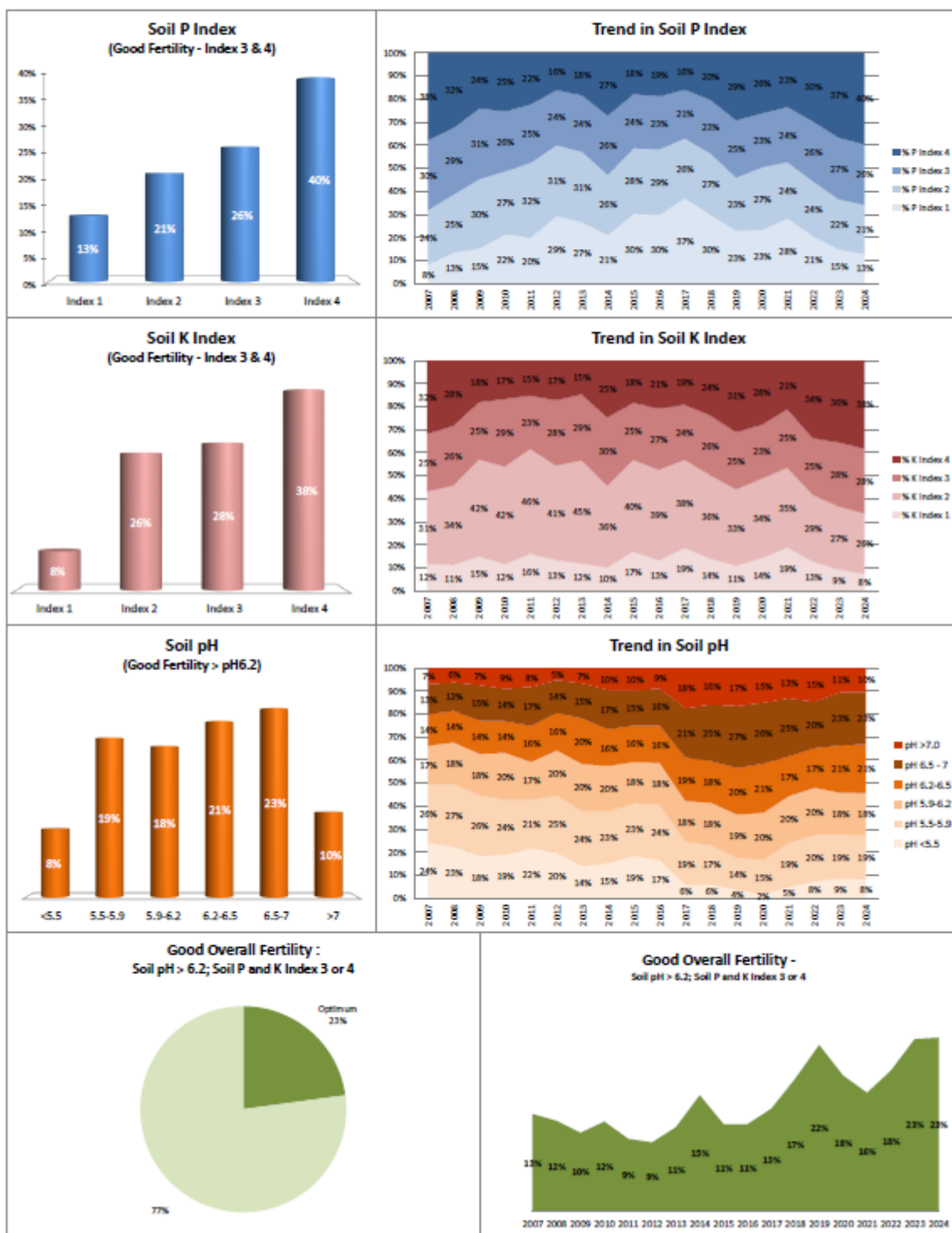
# Tipperary soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises

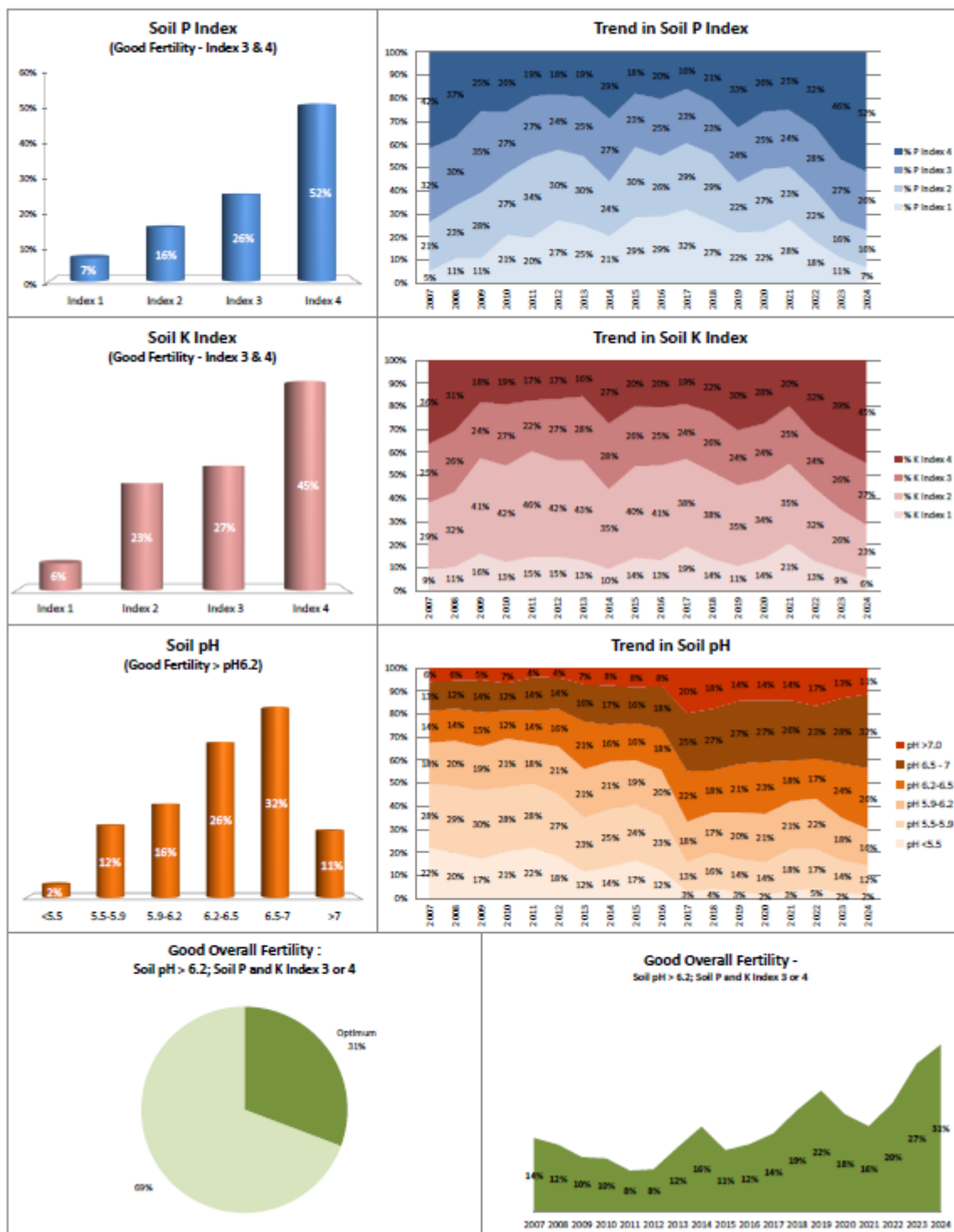


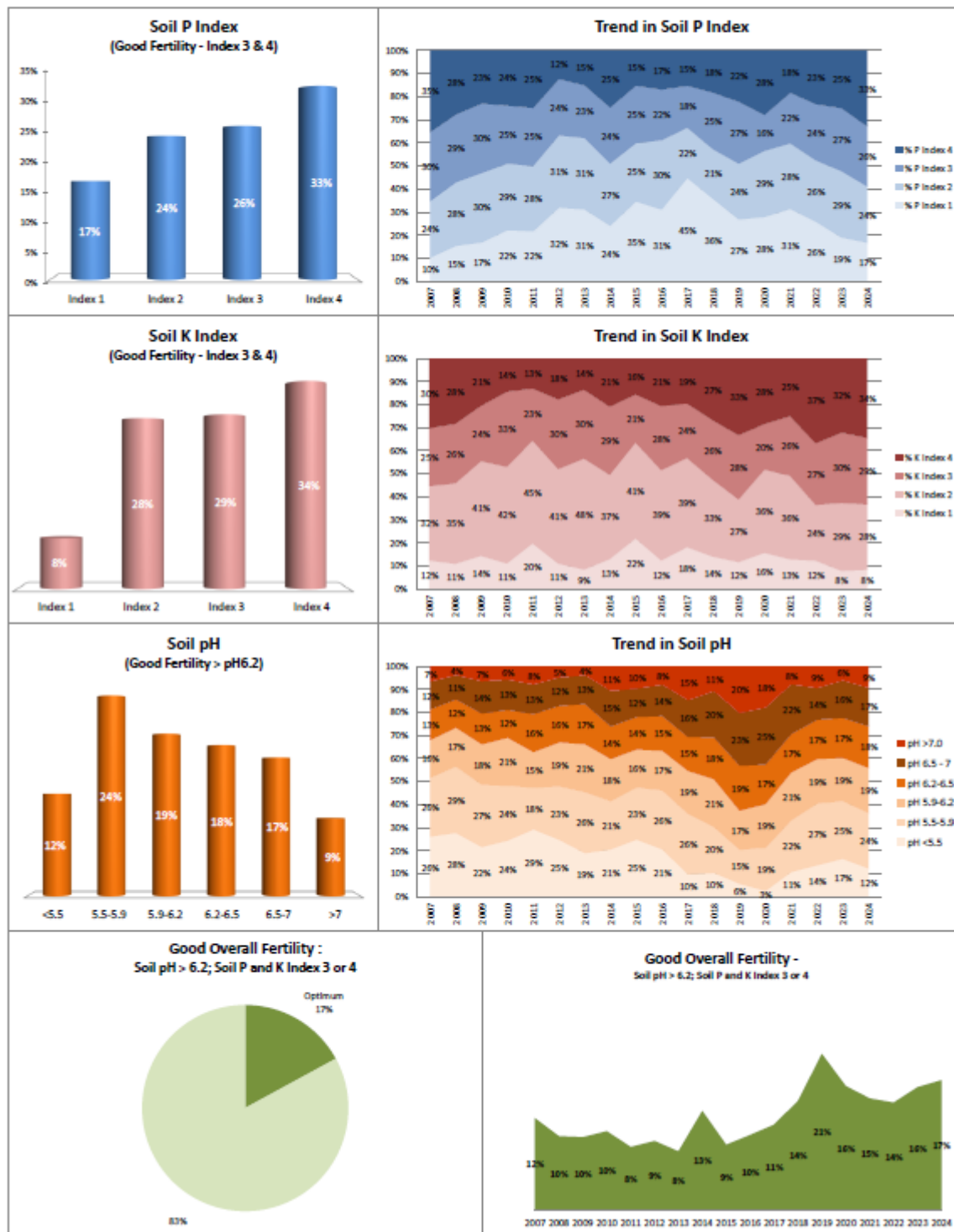
## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Tipperary
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	2,542



County	Tipperary
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	924





## Tillage

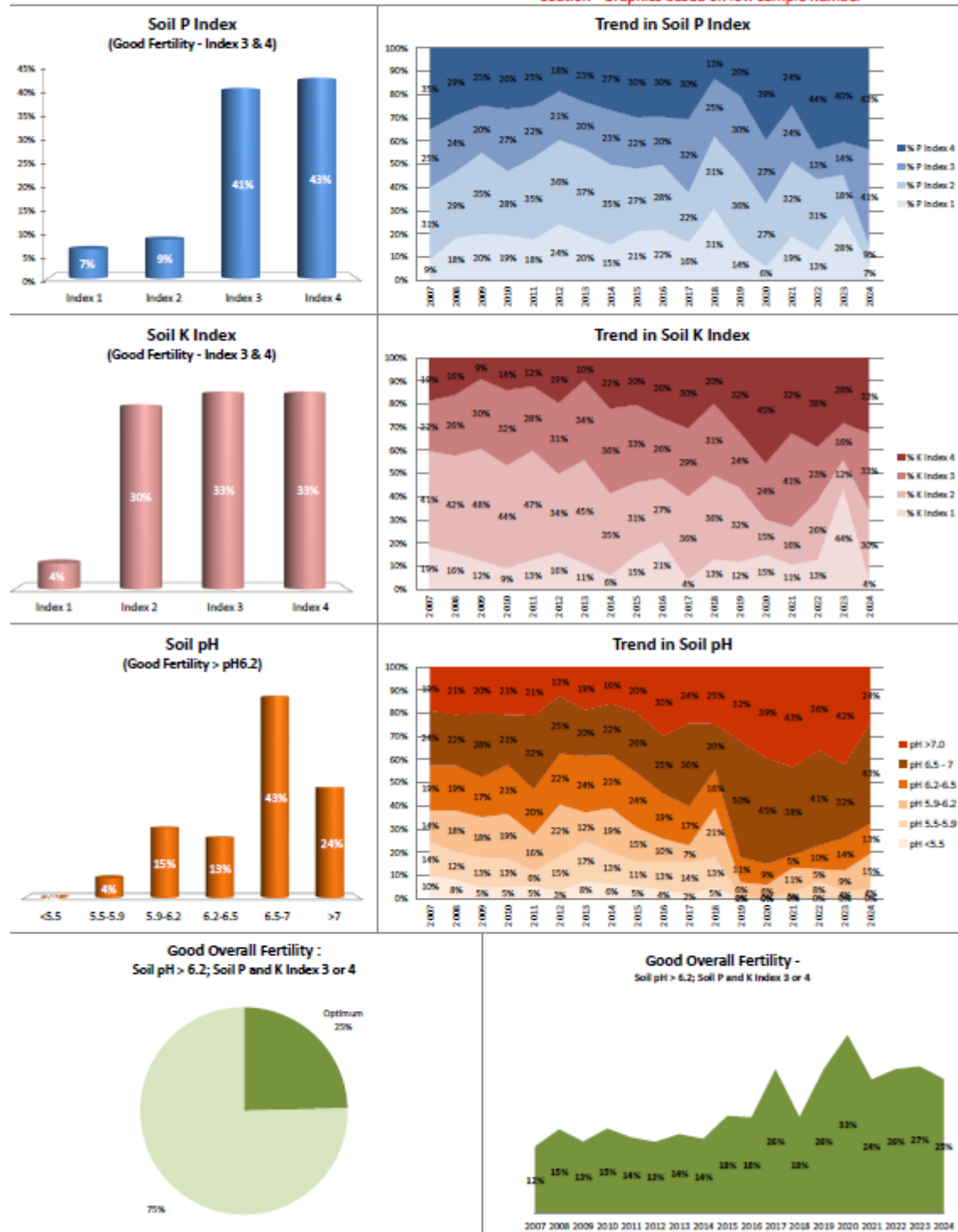


### Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County  
Year  
Enterprise  
Number of Samples

County	Tipperary
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	46

Caution - Graphics based on low sample number



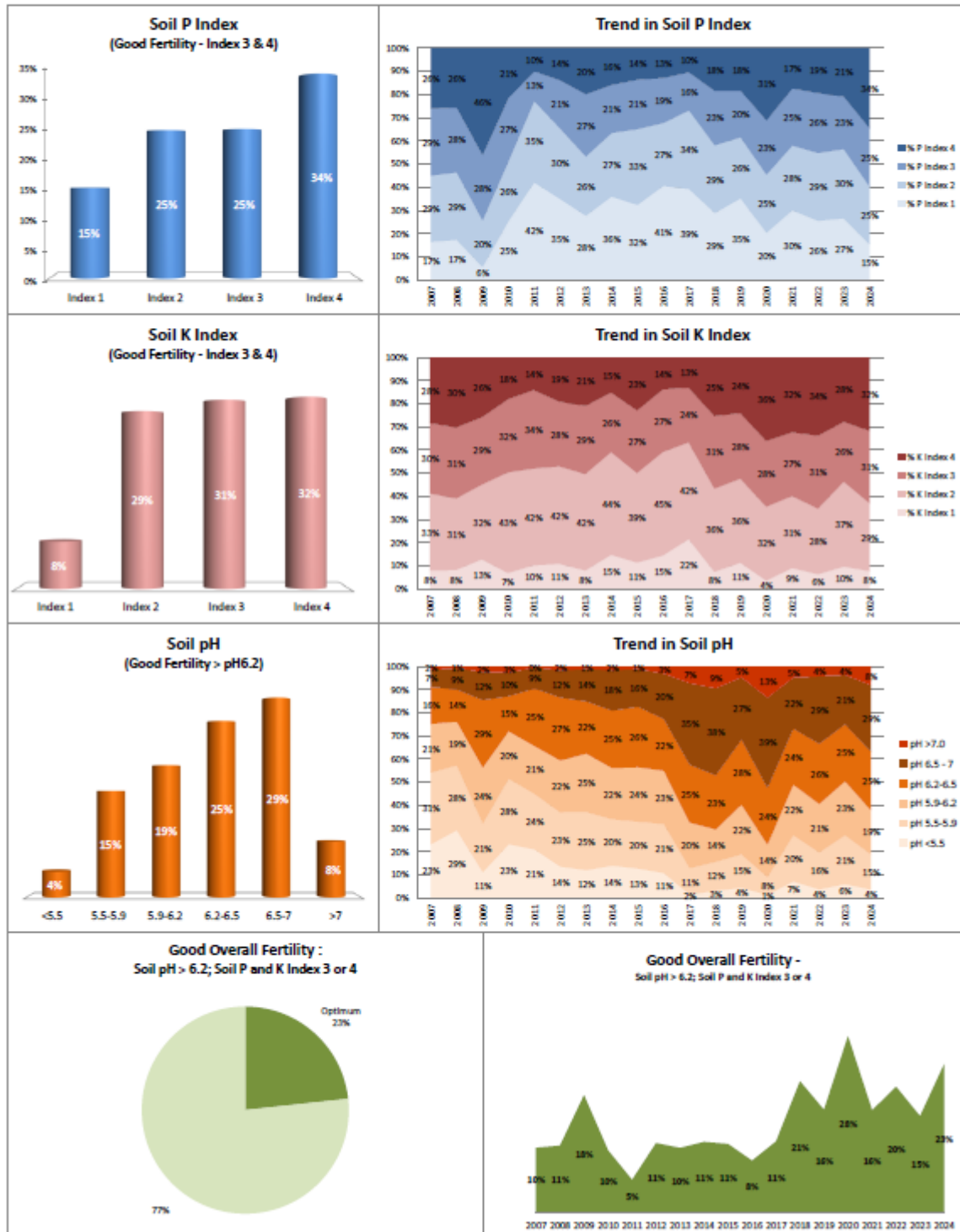
# Waterford soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Waterford
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	1,391





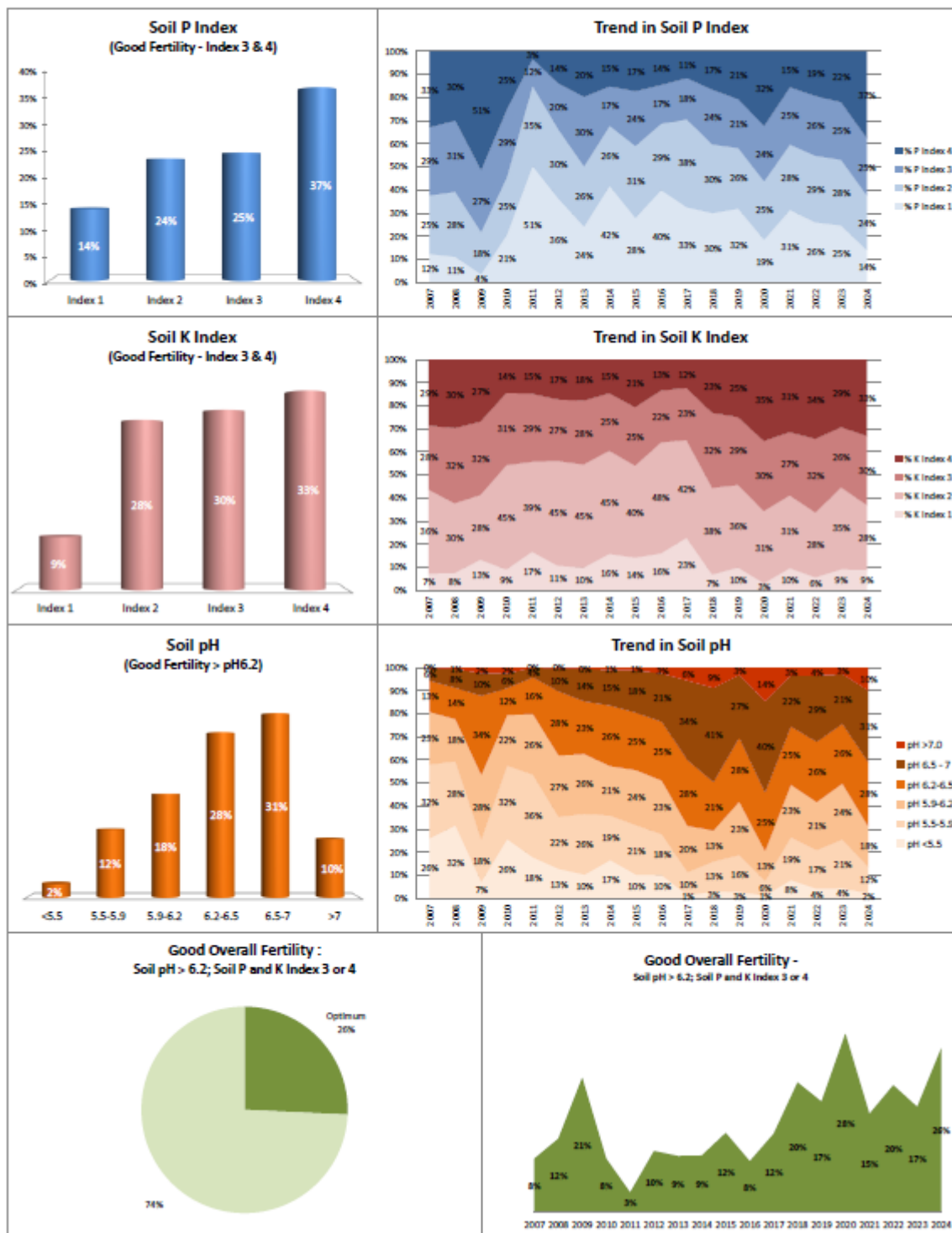
# Dairy



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County  
Year  
Enterprise  
Number of Samples

Waterford
2024
Dairy
997

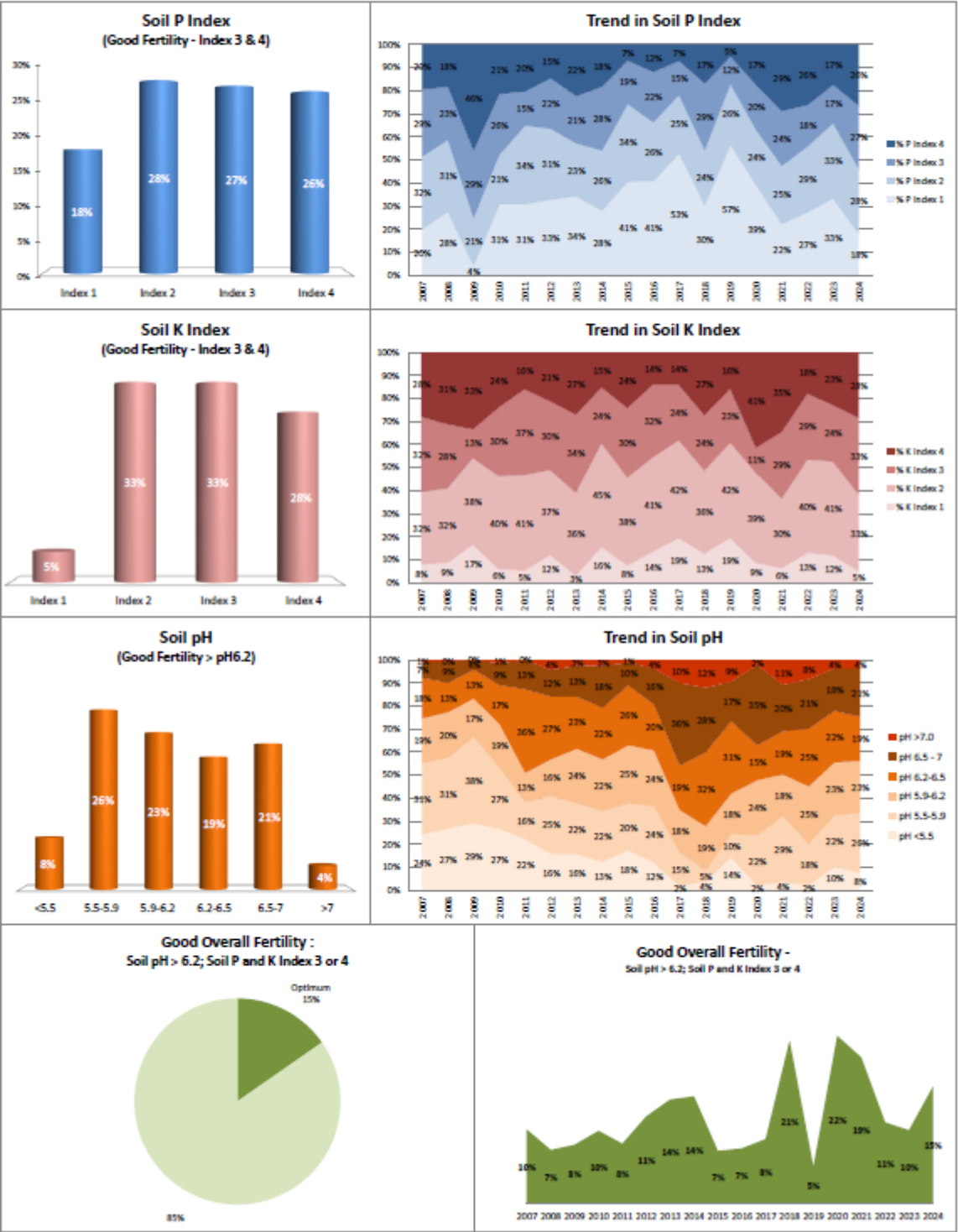


Drystock



Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Waterford
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	370



Tillage

Insufficient data set available

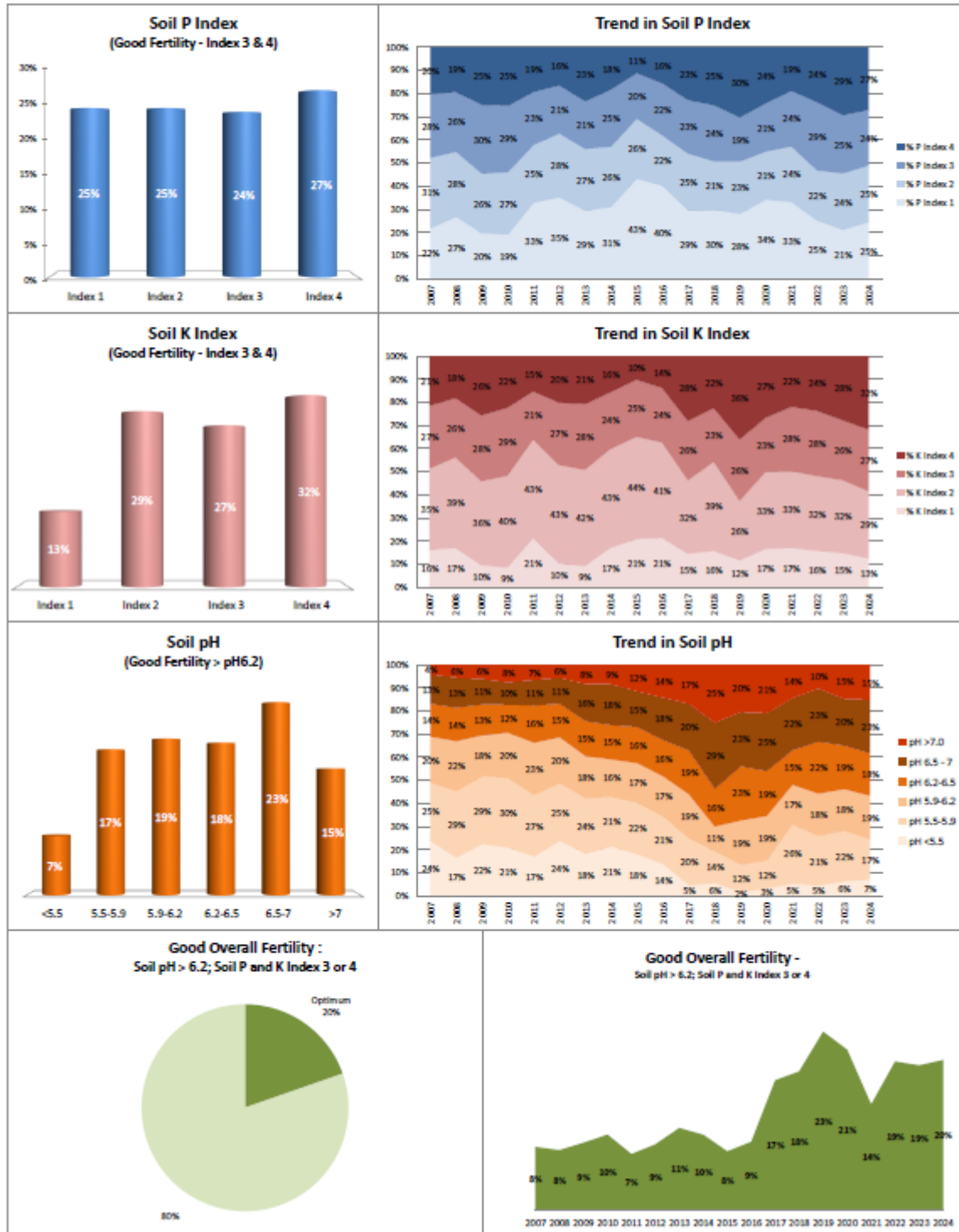
# Westmeath soil fertility results 2024

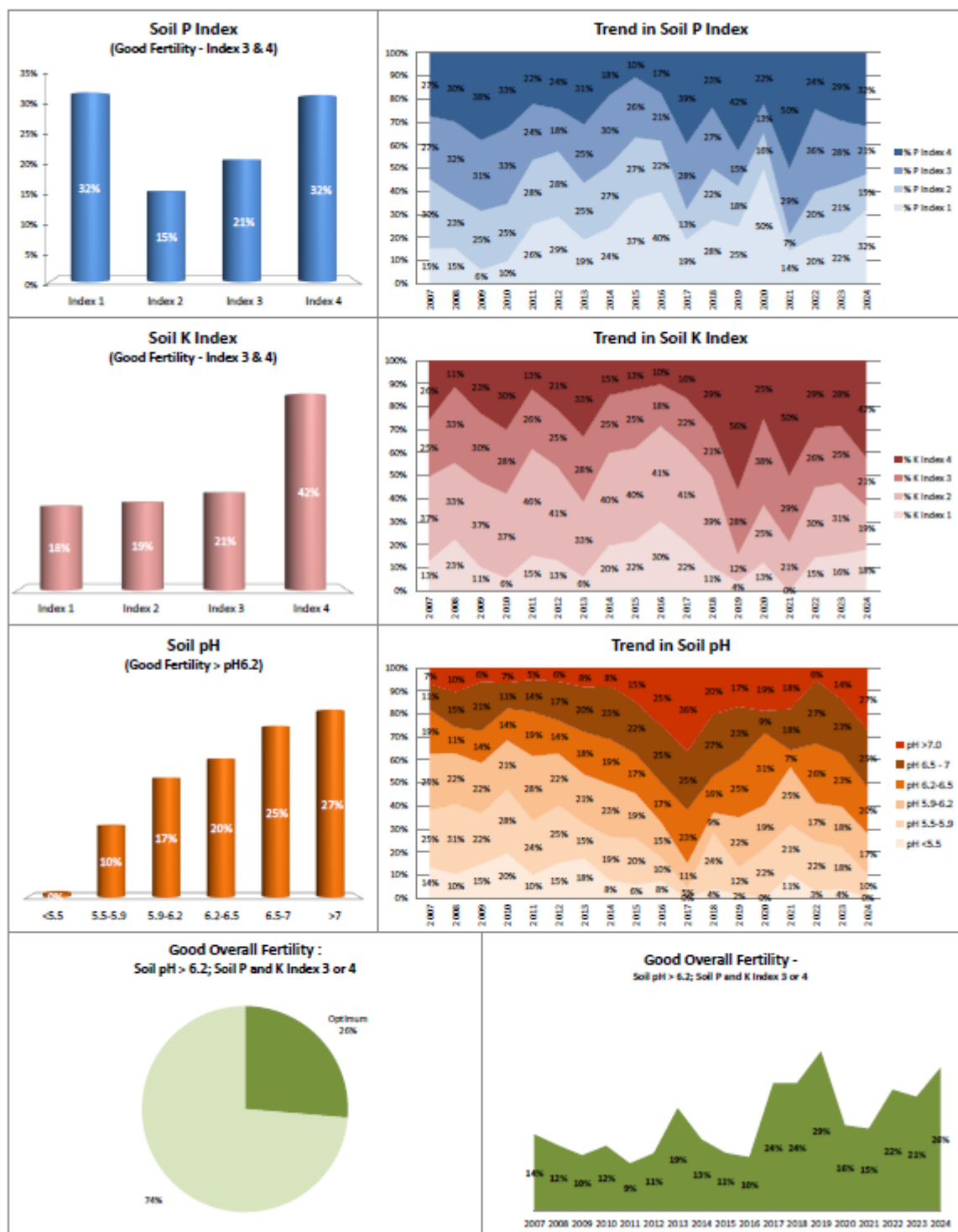
All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Westmeath
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	1,746

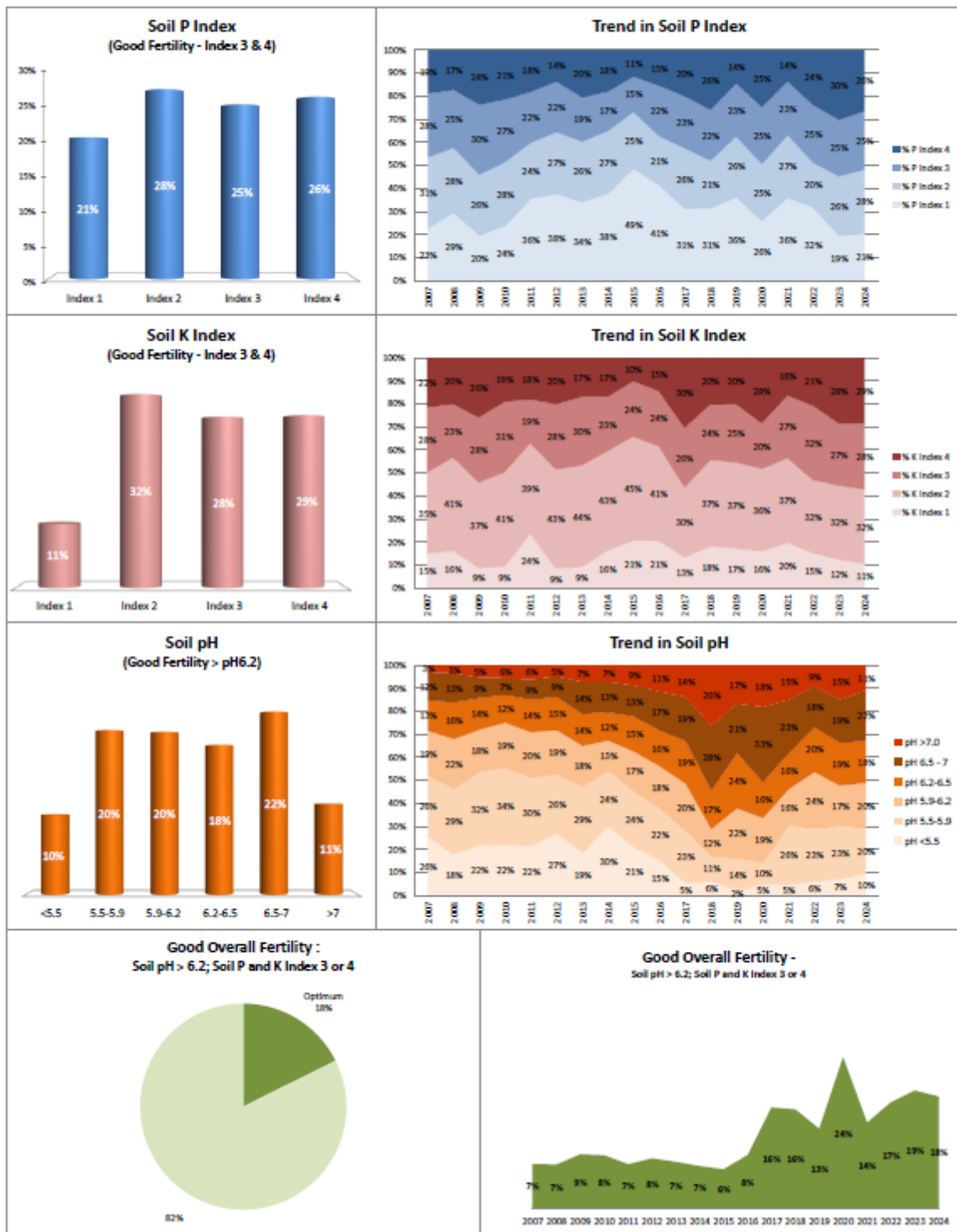






## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Westmeath
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	1,266



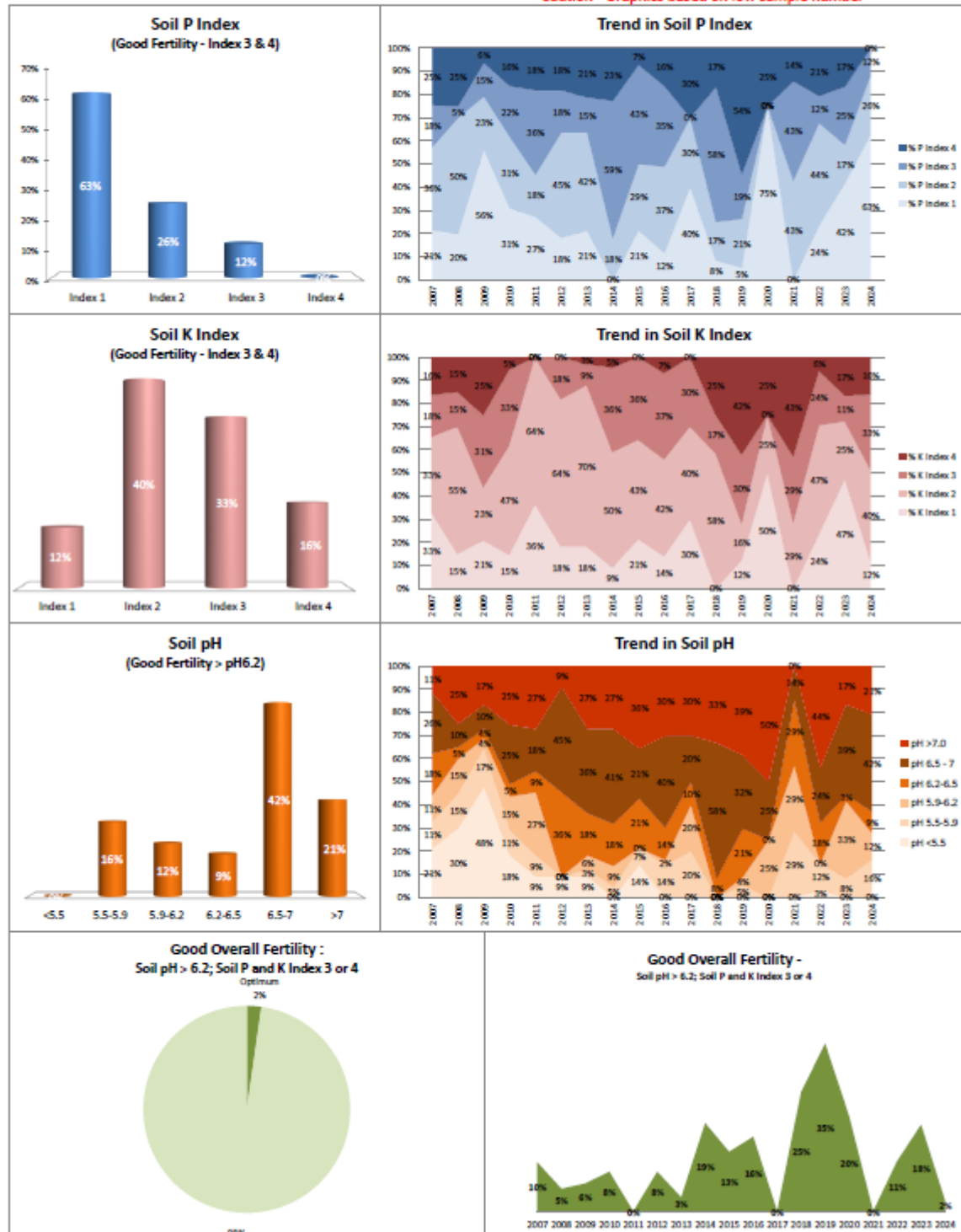
# Tillage



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Westmeath
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	43

Caution - Graphics based on low sample number



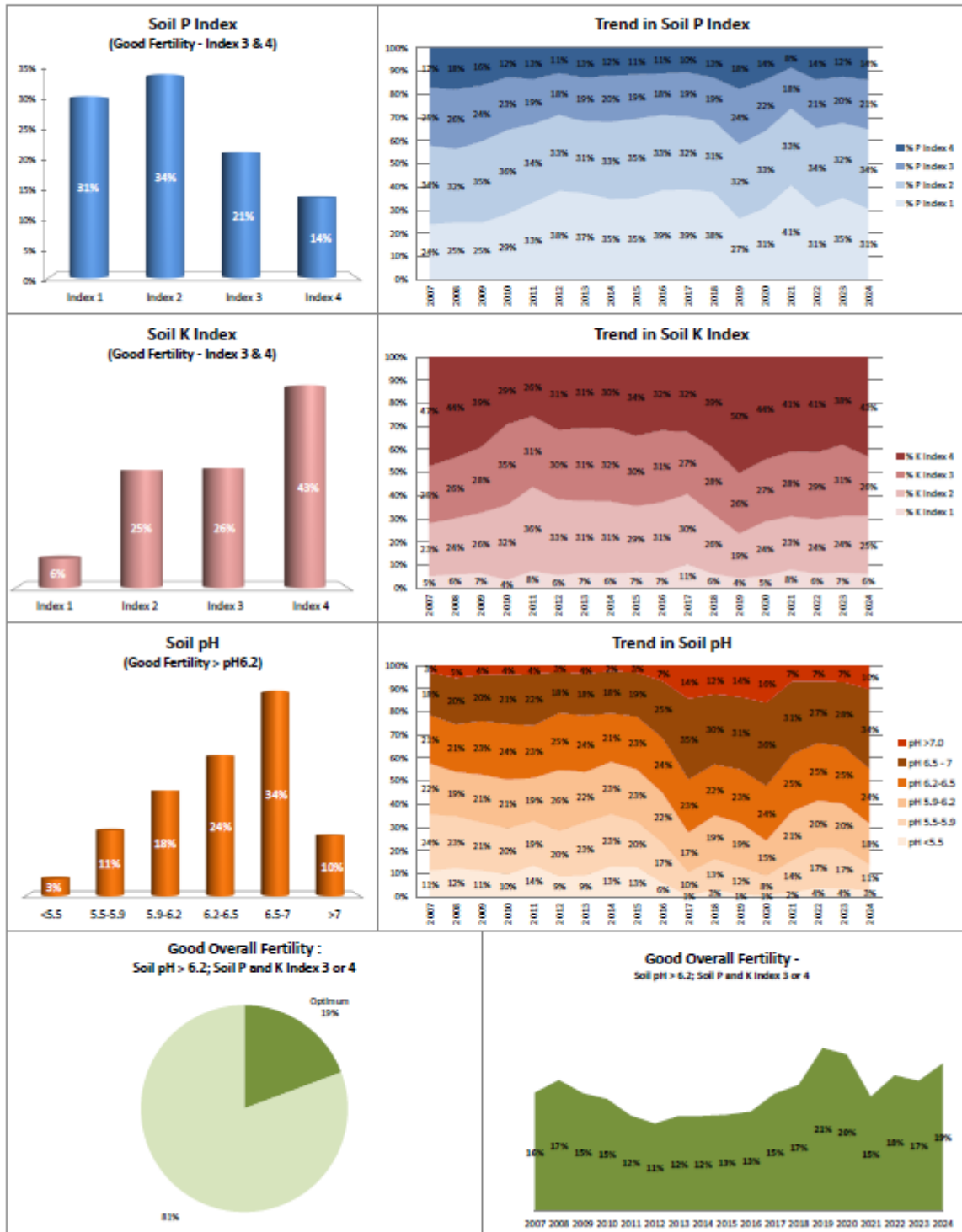
# Wexford soil fertility results 2024

All enterprises



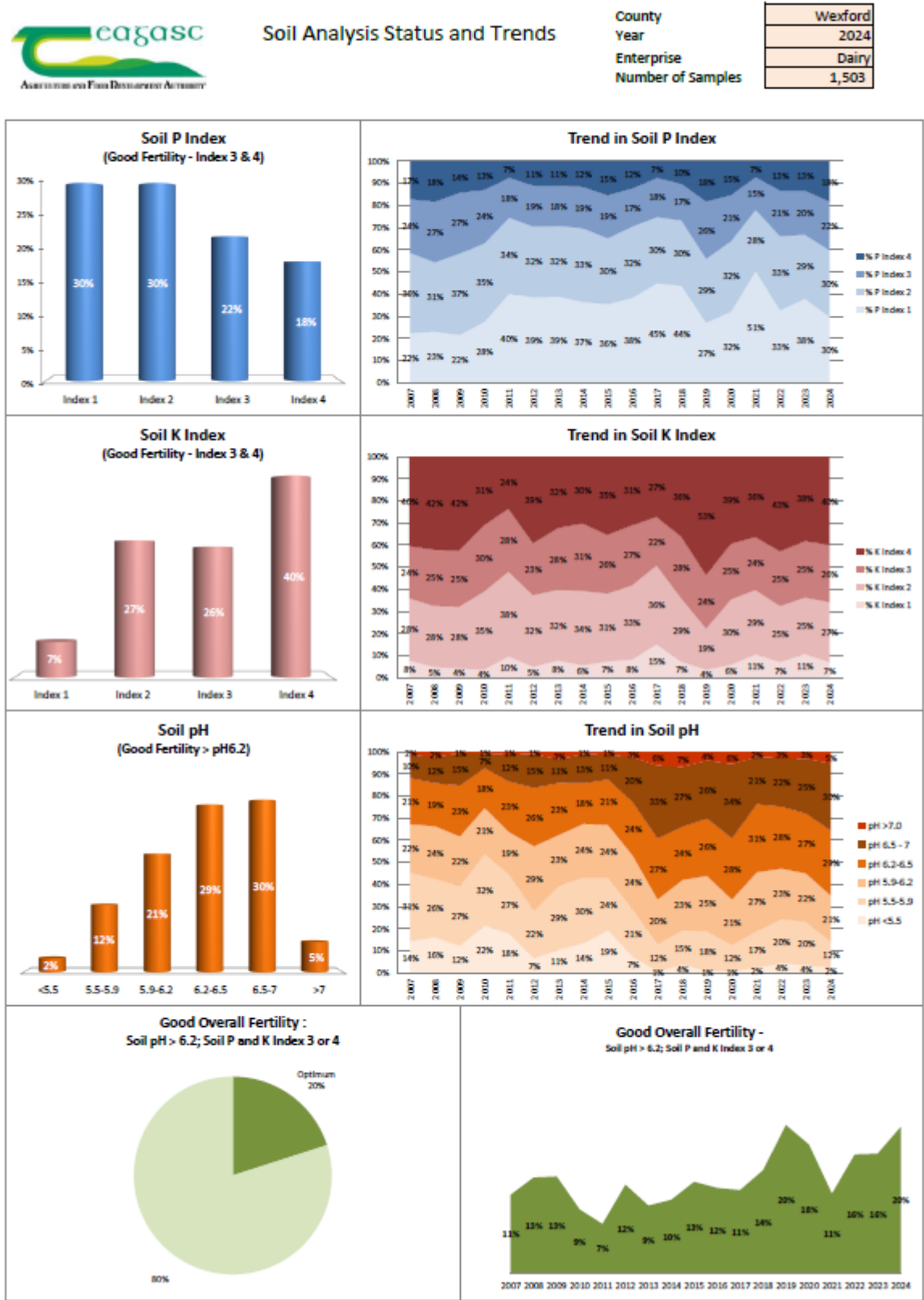
## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Wexford
Year	2024
Enterprise	All Farms
Number of Samples	4,798





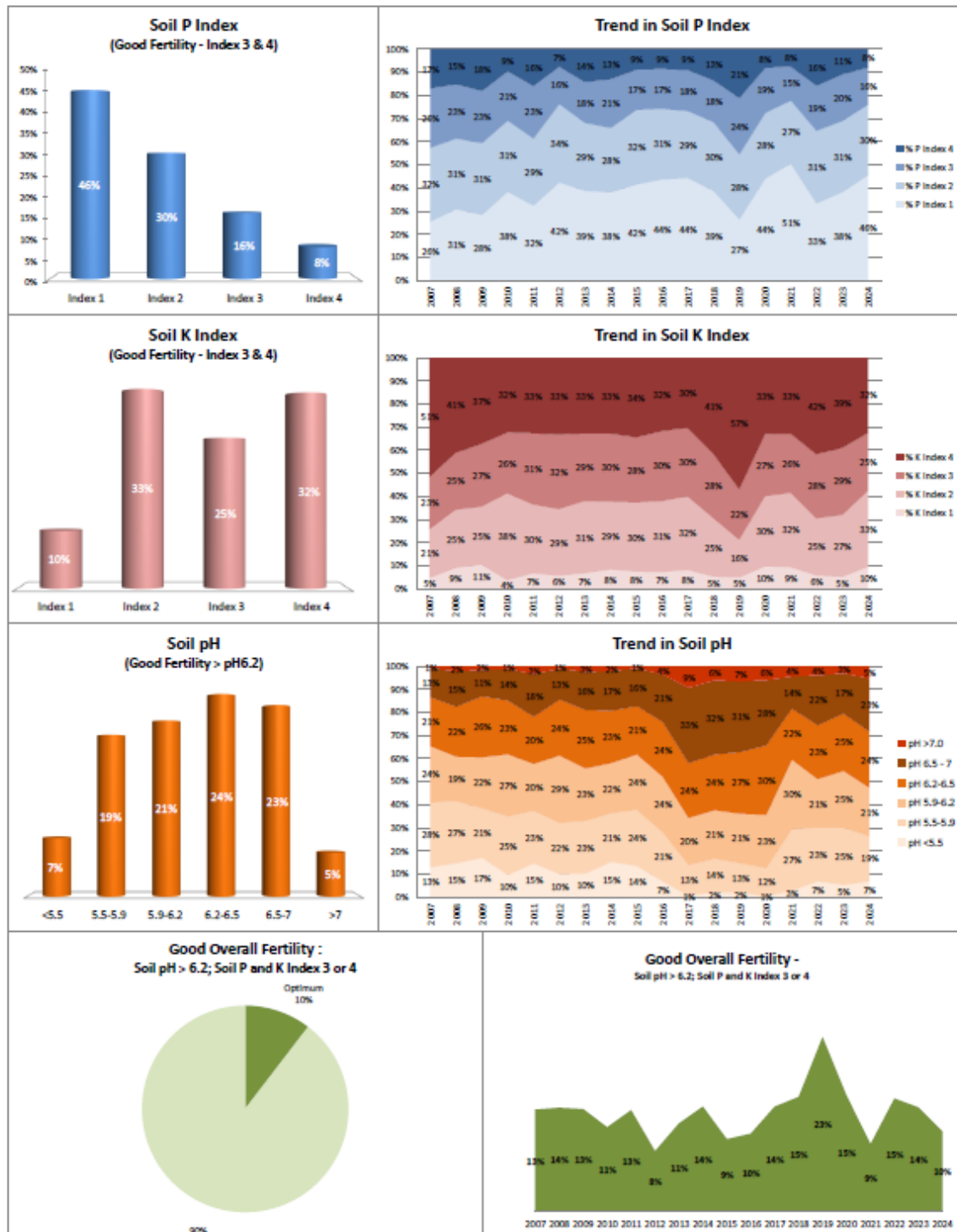
Dairy





## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Wexford
Year	2024
Enterprise	Drystock
Number of Samples	1,046

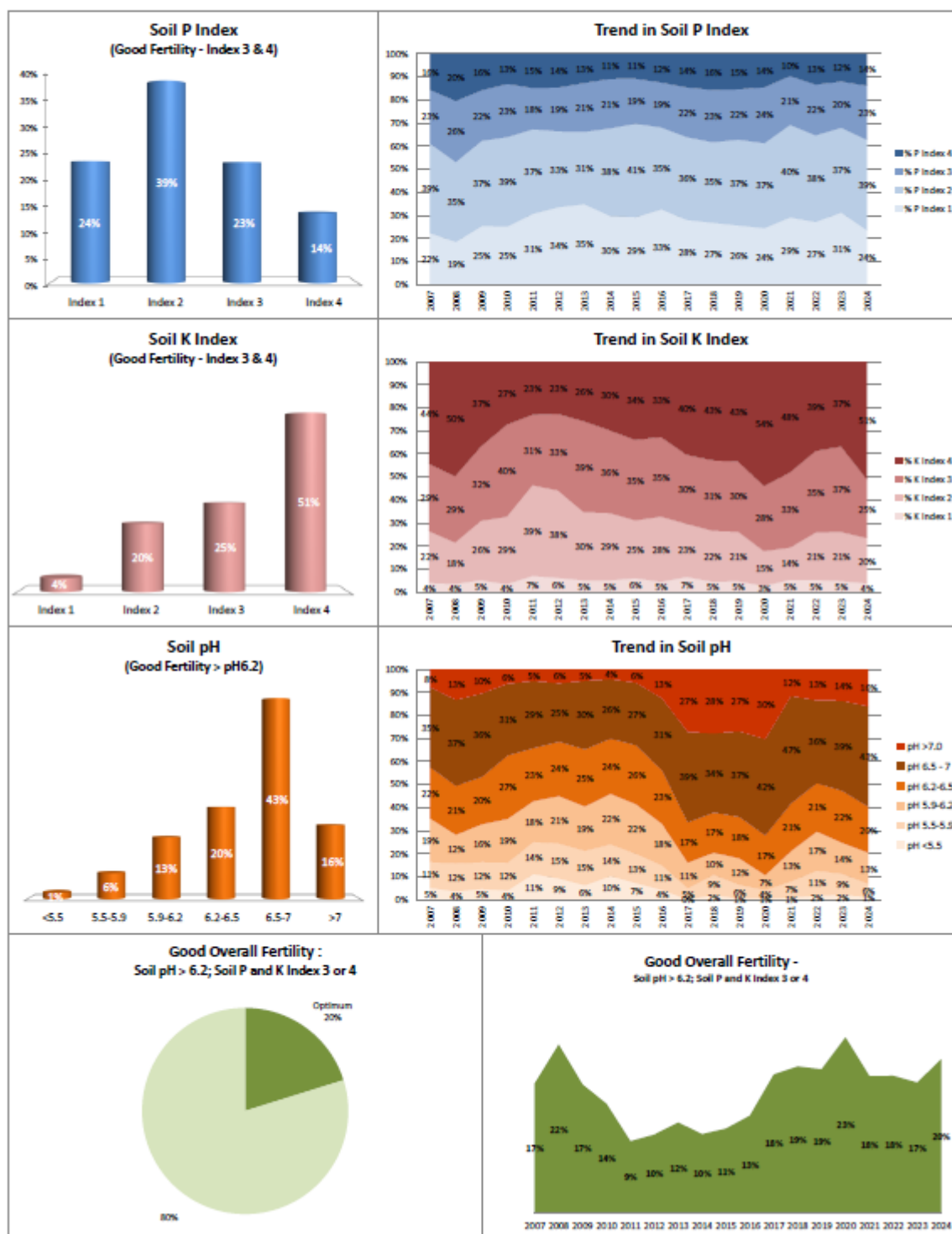


## Tillage



### Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Wexford
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	2,162



# Wicklow soil fertility results 2024

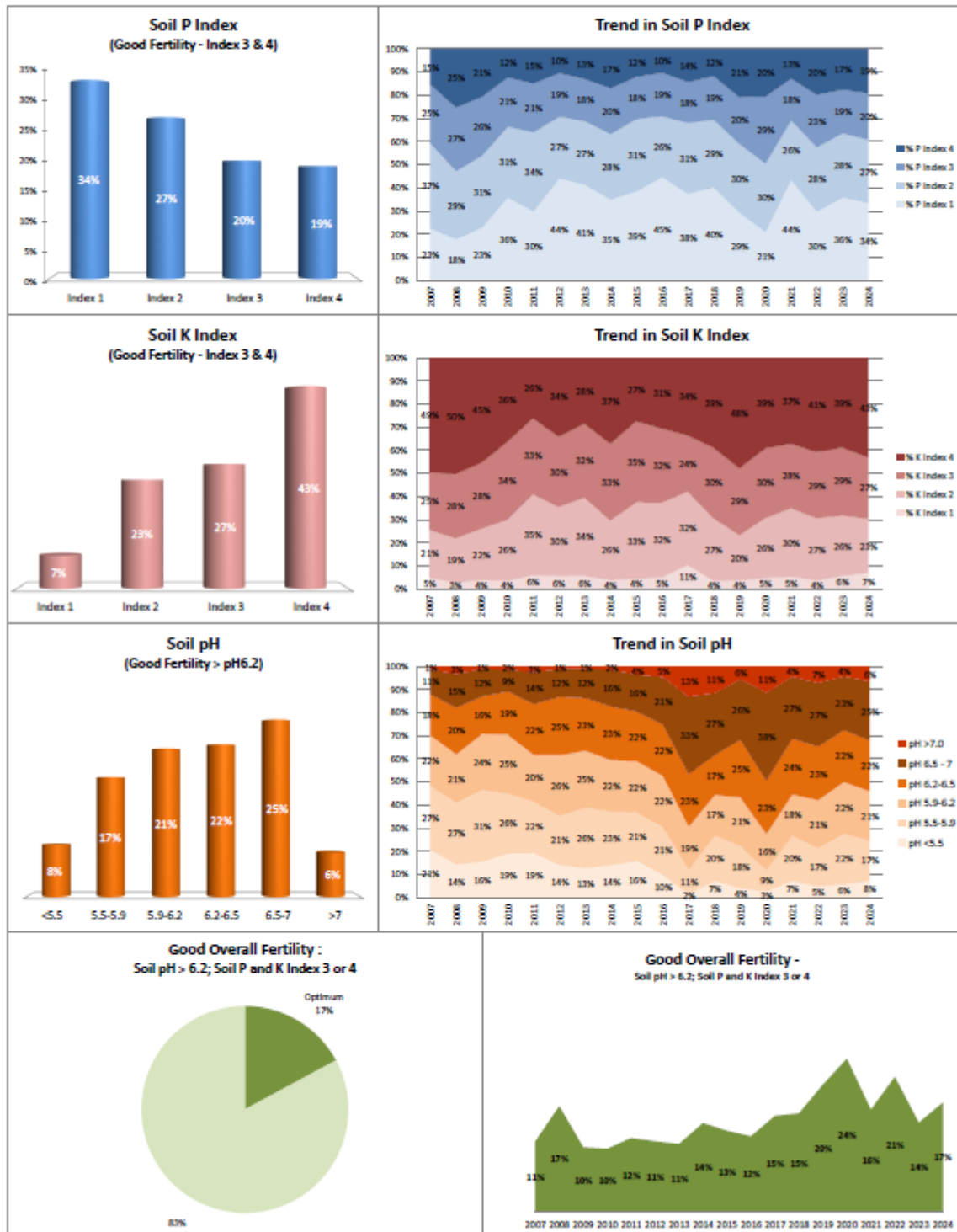
All enterprises



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County  
Year  
Enterprise  
Number of Samples

Wicklow
2024
All Farms
1,714

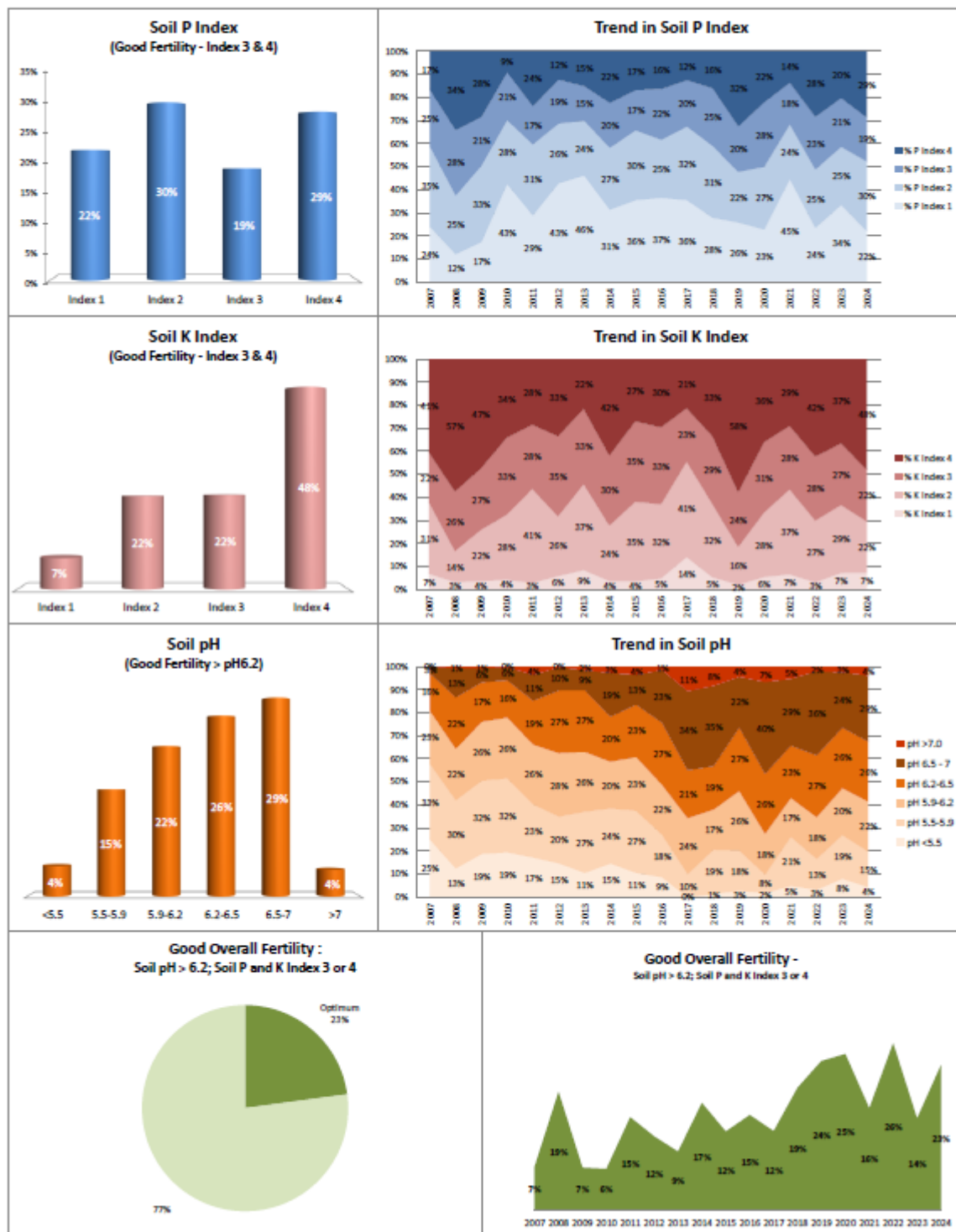


# Dairy



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Wicklow
Year	2024
Enterprise	Dairy
Number of Samples	388

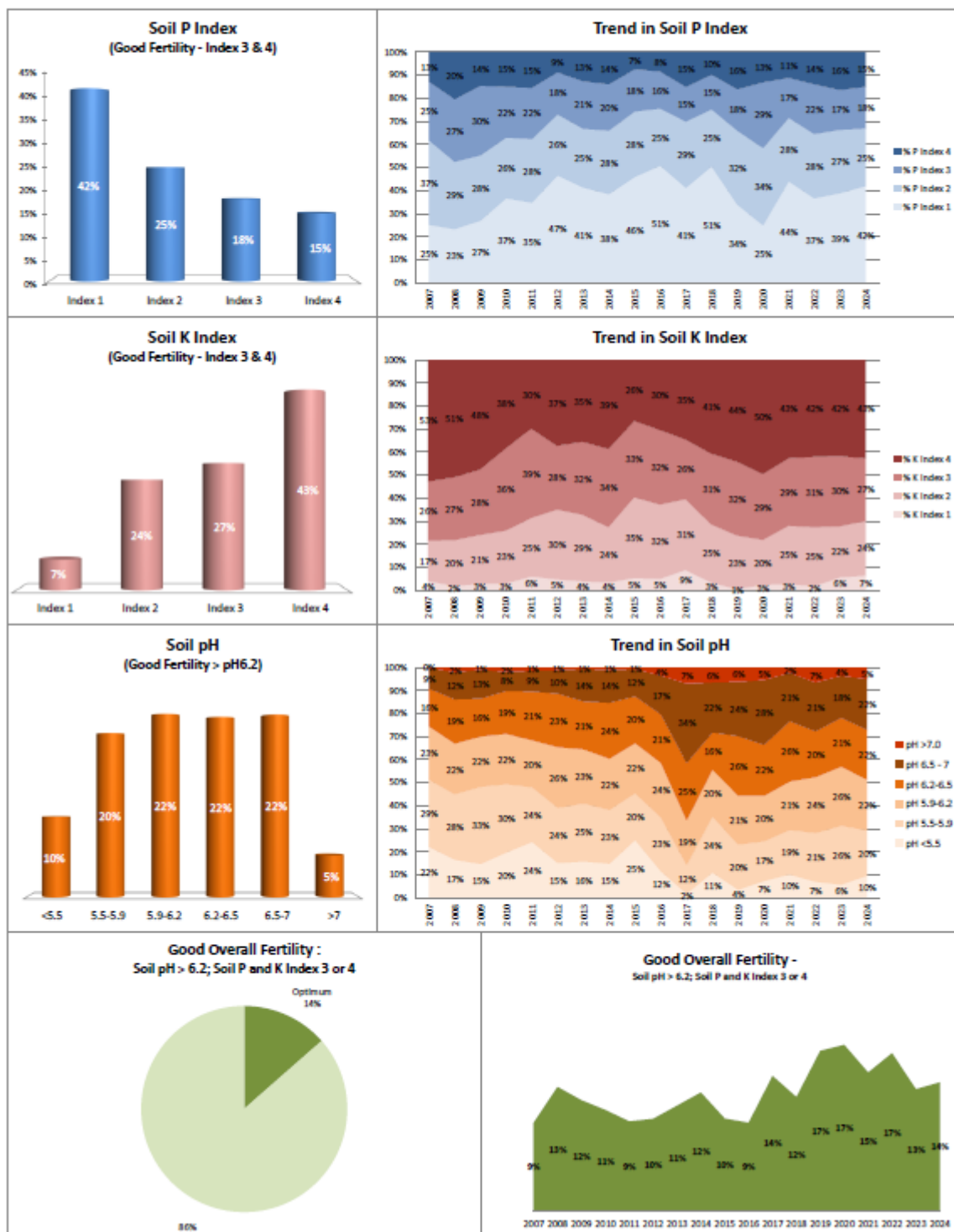




## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County  
Year  
Enterprise  
Number of Samples

Wicklow
2024
Drystock
1,104



# Tillage



## Soil Analysis Status and Trends

County	Wicklow
Year	2024
Enterprise	Tillage
Number of Samples	193

