

TILLAGE

January 2025

Beans



Plant beans in February/March to avoid late harvest.

In 2024, the area planted with beans reached a record 18,000ha. This was partly because farmers had fewer crop options due to a late spring, and the guaranteed income from the protein payment made beans attractive. Late planting leads to a late harvest. To ensure a successful bean crop in 2025, plant early, ideally in February or March.

Spring beans were the most profitable crop on many farms in 2024. With the protein payment available again, beans remain a strong option in 2025.

Teagasc experiments have shown that there is no significant yield difference between establishment methods but direct drill methods offer savings over the traditional plough/one pass system. Aim to establish 30 plants/m². Here are five tips

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**UNCULTIVATED
MARGIN OF**

3m

**required along
watercourses
where the
adjacent crop to
be established is
not a grass crop.**

to achieve a high yield in spring beans:

1. Choose a high fertility site with medium/heavy soil.
2. Plant early (February/March). April-planted crops can be successful but risks are higher.
3. Ensure pH >6.5.

4. Test seed. Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)-certified seed ensures ascochyta levels are less than 1% and that seed is free from stem nematode.
5. Use a pre-emergence herbicide. Post-emergence options are very limited.

Lime

Soil acidity is a major factor in fertiliser efficiency. Applying lime can reduce requirements for nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) fertilisers. In 2023, 39% of tillage soils had an optimal pH level (6.5-7.0 – **Table 1**), which is a strong result. However, further improvement is needed to optimise fertiliser efficiency.

How much lime to spread?

- Test soils every three to five years to determine lime requirements;
- only apply lime based on a recent soil test report;
- don't exceed 7.5t/ha in a single application;
- application rates >7.5t/ha – apply 50% now and 50% in two years; and,
- apply lime to ploughed/pressed soils and incorporate into the top 7.5-10cm.

Lime and slurry/urea

The type of N supplied in slurry and from



Target pH 6.5 for cereals and 7.0 for beans.

Table 1: Optimum soil pH for a range of crops.

Crop	Optimum pH
Beet, beans, peas and oilseeds	7.0
Cereals and maize	6.5
Grassland	6.3
Potatoes	6.0

urea is ammonia N and is prone to loss if applied to freshly limed soils. To avoid N loss it is recommended to wait at least three months after liming before applying urea or slurry. Wait 10 days after slurry or urea application before applying lime.

Teagasc tillage podcast

For all the latest tillage news the Teagasc tillage podcast is available on the Teagasc website, Apple Podcasts, Spotify or by scanning the QR code here.



Selected conditionality measures

Conditionality is simply a set of conditions that all beneficiaries of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) must adhere to. Below are some of conditions that apply to tillage farmers:

- farmers must comply with crop diversification (2/3 crop rule) in 2025;
- no soil test report, no P allocation – where soil samples are not taken then Index 4 for P is assumed until soil tests are taken – maximum area is 5ha per sample;
- low-emissions equipment must be used to apply livestock manure to arable land or



No soil test report, no P allocation.

the livestock manure must be incorporated within 24 hours – pig slurry is low emissions only; and,

- be aware of buffer zone requirements, especially no cultivation within 3m of any watercourse.

National Tillage Conference 2025

Wednesday, January 29, 9.00am-4:30pm
Lyrath Conference Centre, Paulstown Road,
Kilkenny, R95 F685

As National Tillage Conference 2025 (NTC2025) is a physical meeting only, pre-registration will be required by all attendees. Pre-registration will be available at: <https://shorturl.at/JmaJD>.

Conference agenda outline

Session one: The future of disease, weed and pest control; what lies ahead for IPM?

Session two: Sustainable crop production:

carbon, nitrogen and crop establishment elements.

Session three: interactive workshops:

- Workshop one – On-farm research to optimise production;
- Workshop two – Weed clinic;
- Workshop three – Environmental credentials of the tillage sector; and,
- Workshop four – Disease control decisions for 2025.

Workshops will run concurrently for 45 minutes, with each repeated three times.

Spring tillage seminars 2025

Supporting tillage farmers for a successful season

The Teagasc Spring Seminars started on Tuesday, January 14 and will run until the end of February (Table 2). The seminars are a must-attend for tillage farmers planning for the season ahead. These seminars will

focus on key topics to help improve farm efficiency and profitability, including:

- spring crop rotation – balancing financial returns, nutrient management, and variety selection;
- nutrient planning – ensuring allowed fertiliser purchases don't exceed

- purchases on the DAFM Fertiliser Database;
- cost control – assessing crop establishment costs and using on-farm trials to gather actionable insights; and,
- agronomy updates – managing forward crops, tackling grass weeds, and preventing barley yellow dwarf virus (BYDV).

Table 2: Get the tools and advice you need to make informed decisions this spring.

County	Venue	Date	Time
Kerry	Barryroe Heights Hotel, Tralee	January 16	2.00pm
Kildare	Keadeen Hotel, Newbridge	January 20	7.30pm
Cork	Munster Arms, Bandon	January 21	7.30pm
Carlow	Teagasc Oak Park, Cereals Building	January 21	11.00am
Wexford	Riverside Park Hotel, Enniscorthy	January 22	11.00am
Tipperary	Teagasc Office, Clonmel	January 23	7.30pm
Tipperary	Teagasc Office, Nenagh	January 28	11.00am
Galway	Teagasc Office, Athenry	January 28	7.30pm
NTC	Lyrath Convention Centre, Kilkenny	January 29	9.00am
Waterford	Park Hotel, Dungarvan	January 30	11.00am
Wexford	Horse & Hound, Ballinaboola	February 4	7.30pm
Laois	Teagasc Office, Portlaoise	February 4	7.30pm
Kilkenny	Teagasc Office, Kells Road	February 5	7.30pm
Meath	Teagasc Office, Navan	February 5	7.30pm
Louth	Teagasc Office, Dundalk	February 6	7.30pm
Offaly	Tullamore Court Hotel	February 11	7.30pm
Donegal	An Grianán Hotel, Burt	February 27	8.00pm
Dublin	Kettles Country House Hotel, Swords	TBC	11.00am

Start 2025 with health and safety in mind

As we start 2025, put safety and health front and centre in your plans and actions. Particular attention needs to be given to moving vehicles, such as tractors, teleporters and ATVs. Risks associated with livestock, slurry handling and avoiding falls from heights must also be closely managed. Take time now to review your risk assessment document and plan any necessary actions.



Review your risk assessment document now.

HEALTH AND SAFETY