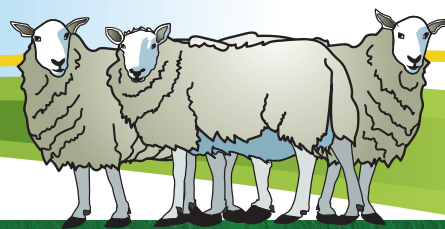


Soils, Nutrients and Fertiliser Factsheet

Fertiliser on Sheep Farms



Introduction

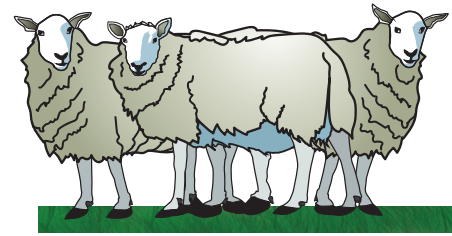
Historically when fertiliser prices have increased usage on sheep farms has reduced, with a sharp increase in spending on concentrate supplementation. Fertiliser prices have increased by approximately 60% since the beginning of the Iran war and are unlikely to fall in the short term.

Key Decisions

- Soil test where recent results are not available
- Correct soil pH (with lime where needed) to release N, P & K in the soil
- How much was spent on fertiliser last year? This will form the starting point for a fertiliser budget. Plan how much you can afford to spend this year
- If soil Indexes are 3 or 4 consider taking a one year holiday from P & K and putting the money towards N fertiliser. Certain priority areas must receive P & K applications. (e.g. recent reseeds, very low index silage ground)
- Consider switching silage ground to more productive high fertility areas of the farm to reduce the need for P & K
- Once you know how much fertiliser you can afford, identify when and where that fertiliser should be spread to give you the best response
- Carry out a fodder budget to identify how much winter fodder needs to be conserved
- Consider selling unproductive stock to reduce stocking rate (e.g. barren ewes, etc.)

Finance

- Existing levels of merchant credit may not cover feed and fertiliser requirements
- Apply now to lending institutions (banks, credit union, etc.) for a stocking loan to cover feed and fertiliser purchases



Scenarios for reduced N applications

- Only purchase a small amount (up to June)
- Reduce amount of fertiliser applied rather than skipping an application

Maximise use of other fertilisers

- Lime, Slurry, Organic Manures, Clover.

Maximise grass growth / reduce demand

- Group up stock quickly to reduce number of grazing groups
- Split paddocks to protect re-growths
- Minimise the amount of ground closed up for silage based on feed budget
- Apply fertiliser to most productive ground
- Sell unproductive stock. Keep additional replacements to rebuild

Ongoing monitoring / analysis

- Fodder surveys
- Cashflow plans
- Reseeding decisions