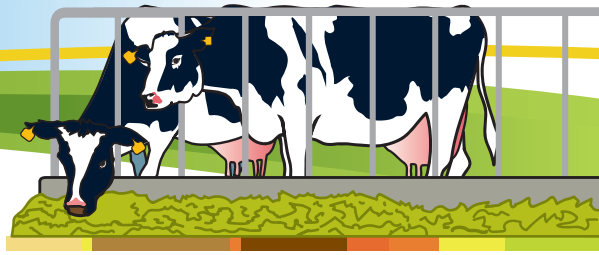
Soils, Nutrients and Fertiliser Factsheet

Planning for Fodder Stocks



Plan for the coming winter when deciding fertiliser N strategy

There are three main points to consider in your farm silage plan:

- What is the likely demand for silage for next winter (including reserves for poor weather, drought, etc.)?
- What are the reserves of silage on hand?
- How will the difference be made up?

The tables below will help to calculate feed supply and demand on your farm. A feed budgeting program is also available in PastureBase Ireland which can be updated regularly after silage cuts, etc. Speak to your local Teagasc advisor about the different options

Table 1. What fodder is required on the farm?

Animal type	No. of stock to be kept over winter = A	No. of months (include a 4-6 week reserve) = B	Pit silage needed tonnes/animal/ month = C	Total tonnes of silage needed A x B x C
Dairy cows			1.6	
Suckler cows			1.4	
0 – 1 year old			0.7	
0 – 2 year old			1.3	
2+ year old			1.3	
Ewes			0.15	
Total tonnes needed			D	
Total bales needed (tonnes multiplied by 1.25)			E	

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Table 2. Calculate pit silage conserved and silage to be cut

(i) Current silage in the pit	Length x breadth x settled height metres ÷1.35 =		Silage in the pit (t) F
	G	H	
Pit silage to be cut	Area (acres)	Yield t (t/ac)	Total yield (t) (G x H)
First cut to be completed			
Second cut to be completed			
(ii) Total yield pit silage to be cut			I

	J	K	
(iii) Bales	Number of bales	Yield/bale	Total yield (t) (J x K)
1st & 2nd cut bales		0.8 t / bale	
		0.8 t / bale	
		Total yield baled silage	L

Table 3. Calculate surplus or deficit

Total silage demand (D) minus total silage produced (F, I, L) = D-F-I-L	
% deficit= (deficit in tonnes ÷ total demand in tonnes) x 100	

Key points to remember

Maximising silage yields:

- Aim to have approx. 70% of silage requirements made by June
- Maximize silage yield in second cut (and subsequent cuts if needed) to reach silage requirements
- Plan for a 20% reserve of winter feed in case of poor conditions next spring
- Soil test and ensure good soil fertility so that fertiliser N use-efficiency and silage yields are maximised
- Use slurry to improve P and K indexes
- Silage ground that is poorly performing/has low perennial ryegrass content should be reseeded at the earliest opportunity

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