SoilCYCLE
Advancing In-Crop Organic Manure Application

Uitilising Organic Manures in a farming system.

Andy O'Donnell
Tillage farmer.

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Farm System

- Mixed farm in Gowran, Co. Kilkenny, with tillage, sheep and horses; growing wheat, barley, oats and beans using min-till for 25 years.
- Rotating summer forage (brassica) crop for finishing lambs.
- Focus on sustainable nutrient management, using organic manures, cover crops and slurry topdressing on winter crops.
- Also utilises farmyard manure and compost as part of the farming system.

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Organic manures across the farm.

- Slurry is applied to winter crops in the spring, aiming for GS 30, subject to conditions.
- Incorporating straw in rotation tends to be oat straw.
- Aiming to maximise nitrogen in slurry by placing it on growing crop.

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In-Crop Application.

- Aim to apply slurry on all winter crops 1500-2000 Gallons.
- Consideration for growing conditions and ground conditions for in-crop application in the spring.
- Our benefit is a 400,000 G slurry tower we built in the middle of the farm.
- Having storage allows us to access slurry in the closed period, but without this it would be challenging to access slurry.

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Dribble Bar System

- Collaborated with neighbour Charlie Farrell to purchase an 18m Vogelsang dribble bar with section control, shared between both farms.
- Contractor supplies pump & pipes, Charlie drove the dribble bar.
- 15m section control allows us to go between 30m tram lines on my farm.
- Minimal crop damage this year as we waited for ideal conditions.

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Reducing Chemical fertiliser Costs.

- Slurry in 2026 tested N15/P1/K21 per 1000G I put a value of 50 euro per thousand gallons on paper Ref N 1.85/Kg P 3.50/kg K 1/Kg.
- Significant investment in slurry storage, requiring a 3–4 year ROI.
- Potential farm savings of €10,000+ per year; slurry needs to be available free of charge to make the investment viable.

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Making Organic Manures work in our system.

- Better timing and application can improve their value within the farming system.
- Working together and investing in the right equipment can make the system more practical or a good contractor.
- The aim is to reduce reliance on purchased fertiliser while maintaining crop performance.

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Thank You

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