

Introduction

Fertiliser prices have more than doubled since 2020 and are unlikely to fall in the short term. Traditional merchant credit levels are unlikely to meet feed and fertiliser costs on drystock farms in 2022

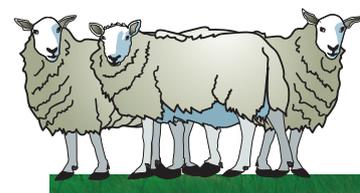
Key Decisions

- 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 in 2021? This will form the starting point for a fertiliser budget. Plan how much you can afford to spend in 2022 (Tables 1 & 2)
- 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 (Table 3)
- Carry out a fodder budget in spring 2022 to identify how much winter fodder needs to be conserved
- Don't sell surplus winter fodder during this winter
- Consider selling unproductive stock to reduce stocking rate (e.g. barren ewes, poor performing ewes, ewes scanned with singles, etc.)

Finance

- In many cases 2022 fertiliser will have to be paid for in advance of delivery
- 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

Table 1. Calculate the quantity of fertiliser purchased in 2021 and application rate per ha



Element	kg used 2021	no. ha	kg/ha
N	7200	40	180
P	1120	32	35
K	1960	24	81
N			
P			
K			

Table 2. Financial budget for 2022

Fertiliser Type	2021 (€) spent	Approximate cost increase 2021	Cost of 2021 fertiliser allowance in 2022	2022 (€) budget
Straight nitrogen	x 2.3			
Compound NPK				
P & K fertiliser				
Total spend				

Table 3. Suggested N rates varied to increase response rates. Figures in brackets are 80% of suggested rates

Suggested N rates (kg/ha) by stocking rate with approximate application dates											
Ewes/ha	kg/ha org N	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Total N rate grazing (kg/ha)	Total N rate incl. silage (kg/ha)
6	<80		13 (12)	13 (10)				13 (9)		39 (31)	66 (53)
8	99		23 (18)	19 (15)				18 (14)		60(47)	96 (77)
10	118		25 (20)	20 (15)	15 (12)			21 (18)		81 (65)	126 (101)
11	129		25 (20)	20 (15)	15 (12)		10 (8)	20 (16)		90 (72)	140 (112)
12	138	25 (20)		23 (18)	15 (12)		16 (14)	23 (18)		102 (82)	156 (125)
14	158	33 (26)		25 (20)	20 (16)		20 (16)	26 (20)		123 (98)	186 (149)