

# Signpost Tillage Self-Assessment: What Changes Will You Make?

Taking the time to assess your farm's performance will help you to identify opportunities to make your farm business more profitable and enjoyable, while also allowing you to play your part in caring for the environment and making space for nature.

Step 1: Take a few moments to read the following statements and tick those that you agree with.

	Yes
1. I am applying lime to correct low soil pH on all productive agricultural soils.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. All of my soil samples are at optimum P & K levels ( $\geq$ Index 3).	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I draw up and follow a Nutrient Management plan (NMP) annually with my advisor.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I apply optimum split N rates at the correct timings in springtime to reduce losses through leaching/volatilization.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I replace some of my chemical fertiliser with organic manures each year	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I am using low-emission slurry spreading (LESS) equipment to spread my liquid organic manures, and all pre-planting applications are incorporated within 4 – 6 hours.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I apply in-crop organic fertiliser to my growing crops in springtime to optimise nutrient use efficiency.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I use precision technology for my nutrient applications for better nutrient use efficiency.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I grow leguminous crops e.g beans, peas, lupins	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I chop and incorporate up to 30% of my straw residue annually.	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I establish ground cover on 75% - 80% of my cereal ground used for spring crop production.	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I plant cover crops to reduce nutrient losses and as a cultural control method to help reduce my pesticide use.	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I use rotational break cropping to optimise my crop yields, nutrient use efficiency, and for IPM to protect available pesticides.	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I record all pesticide use on the farm electronically or use the IGAS Record Book.	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I have incorporated field margins along field boundaries and buffer strips along streams/rivers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I have changed my hedgerow management practice to allow more height and width.	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I have planted an area of trees or native hedgerow in the last three years.	<input type="checkbox"/>
TOTAL	<input type="text"/> /17

Step 2: How do you score? Count the number of ticks.

SCORE	15 - 17	12 - 14	11 OR LESS
	You are farming sustainably	Some scope for improvement	Significant scope for improvement

What changes to your farming practices will you make in the next 12 months?

What change(s) will make your farm more sustainable?

Establish your numbers.\*

Learn one new skill.

Change one farming practice.

Take the first step towards a better farming future.

Your one action will make a difference.

\* GHG emissions figures, biodiversity score, water quality in local stream / river etc.

Contact your Teagasc Adviser for further details.

Step 3: Having completed the assessment, you should now identify up to three actions that you can start in the next twelve months.

ACTION AREA	FUTURE TARGET	FIRST STEP
Example: N fertiliser	Grow some leguminous crops (e.g. beans) in my rotation	Prepare a cropping plan with my advisor
1.		
2.		
3.		