

High quality grass silage - getting the basics right



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Teagasc National Liquid Milk Conference

Navan

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Factors affecting

- ~ **yield** for silage
- ~ **digestibility** for silage
- ~ **preservation** of silage
- ~ **aerobic stability** of silage



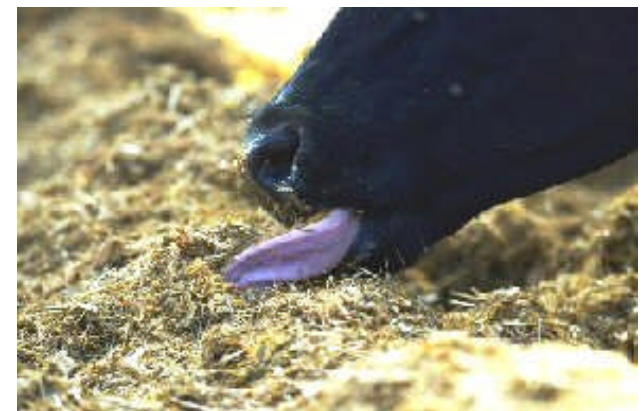
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Yield for silage

- **Ryegrass swards** (vs. poor pasture)
- **Ensure adequate P, K and pH status** (based on soil analysis and manure input)
- **Avoid soil compaction** (silage-making, slurry/fert. spreading, grazing, etc.)
- **Sufficiently long growth duration**
- **First cut – apply total 125-150_(reseed) kg N/ha via inorganic fertiliser (urea/CAN) and slurry**



Quality

- **Digestibility – is it leafy or stemmy?**



- **Preservation – is taste/smell OK for cows?**



- **Aerobic stability – is it heating or mouldy?**



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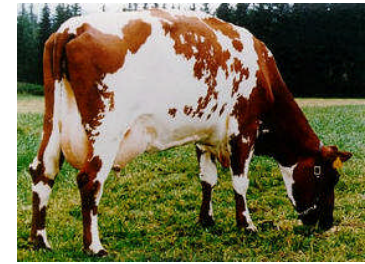
Digestibility - is it leafy or stemmy?



Digestibility - *what difference does it make?*



Milk yield (kg ECM)/day



First cut	Concentrates (kg/cow/day)				
	0	4	8	12	16
v. Early DMD 79.4%	23.4	29.1	32.8	31.0	
Early DMD 75.6%		27.1	29.3	28.8	
Intermed. DMD 69.0%		24.9	27.3	30.1	28.7

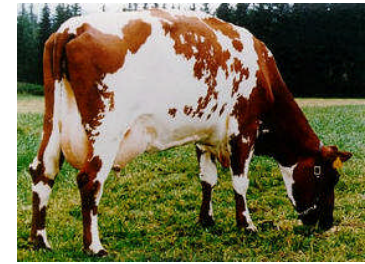


Source: Randby *et al.* (2012)

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