

Take action now...

...if you are short of fodder.

1. Re-evaluate the fodder situation on your farm. Where animals were housed early, your requirement for silage will have increased accordingly. Now is the time to take stock of what has been used to date and how much longer current supplies will last at the current rate of use.
2. Where a fodder deficit will be an issue, it is imperative to act early to try avoid a situation where silage stocks run out completely on farms.
3. Once you have at least 50-60% of your winter silage requirements, you have options available.
4. Silage dry matters can vary. The standard is 200kg DM per tonne of pit silage and 180kg per bale (1,000kg of silage at 20% moisture = 200kg DM). These are typical with a maximum of one day wilting. If DM is higher, take this into account.
5. There is no single strategy to deal with the shortage. A combination of actions will be needed to help you deal with the problem:
 - a. Reduce demand for winter feed:
 - i. sell off cull cows/empty cows (scan cows early);
 - ii. sell store cattle; and,
 - iii. put finishing cattle on meals and minimal silage.
 - b. Maximise grass growth on the farm over the next few months: apply 20-30 units of nitrogen (N) to grazing ground when the closed period for spreading N reopens, where possible. Target early turnout as a means to reduce requirements for silage.
 - c. The alternative feed options include:
 - i. buying silage – baled/pitted silage;
 - ii. buying ration to fill the gap;
 - iii. buying alternative forages such as maize silage, whole crop cereal silage, or fodder beet; or,
 - iv. buying cereal grains and store.
 - d. Examine the options carefully. Cost is important but other factors also need to be considered, including the risk of poor quality, the need for storage/handling facilities, the cost of balancing for protein and minerals, the labour input, cash flow implications and feed space requirements.
6. Don't panic buy feedstuffs to fill the gap. Talk to an adviser before making your decision.

FODDER BUDGETING WORKSHEET

ON A FIVE-MONTH WINTER:

Six cull cows eat 50 TONNES OF SILAGE (or 55 bales)

Seven store cattle eat 50 TONNES OF SILAGE (or 55 bales)

Fodder budgeting worksheet

Farmer details

Name	Enterprise
Herd number	Land type
County	

SECTION 1: What fodder is required on the farm?

Animal type	A No. of stock to be kept over winter	B Number of months	C Pit silage needed/ animal/month	Total tonnes of silage needed – multiply AxBxC
Dairy cows			1.6	
Suckler cows			1.4	
0-1 year old			0.7	
1-2 year old			1.3	
2+ year old			1.3	
Ewes			0.15	
Total tonnes needed				Tonnes <input type="text" value="X"/>
or				or
Total bales needed (tonnes multiplied by 1.1)				Bales <input type="text" value="Y"/>

SECTION 2: How much silage is in the yard?

Farms with pit and bale silage	A	Pit silage ¹	
	B	Bales – in the yard	
	C	Bales, converted to equivalent of pit silage (Multiply B by 0.9)	
	D	Total silage (A+C)	
Farms with bale silage only	E	Total bales	

¹ Pit silage (length x breadth x settled height) metres ÷ 1.35 = tonnes (t) equivalent.

SECTION 3: Surplus or shortage?

Surplus or deficit	Using pit and bales Deficit in tonnes (D-X)	Using bales only Deficit in bales (E-Y)
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
What's the % deficit? (Deficit/X (or Y) x100*)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

* If you are using alternative feed sources, please contact your adviser.