

# This week is critical for grass and silage

## Advice for Farmers

### Plan now for next winter!



Complete a simple feed budget comparing projected winter feed demand to planned silage area and feed reserves.

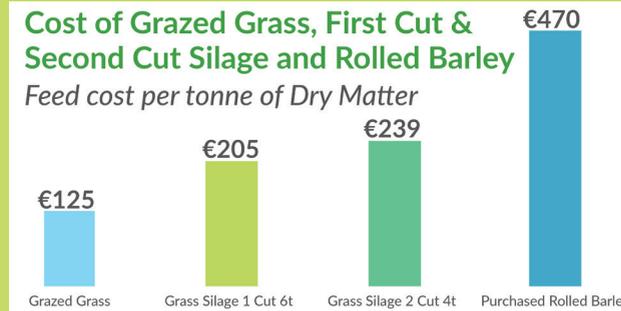
1 hectare of average first cut silage will feed 3.5 cows (or 7 weanlings) for the winter. Build in a feed reserve of at least one month.

Make sure to close enough area for silage. Farms should have 100% of their winter feed requirement secured by mid-August. Lower stocked farms should aim to make 75% of their silage as first cut.

### Grass & silage are the cheapest feeds



On good swards, 1 tonne of protected urea (46% N) applied should yield close to 45 tonnes of fresh silage. This is better value than buying concentrates next winter.



Graze leafy swards over the next few weeks to maintain feed quality - skip heavy covers and cut these as silage.

### Aim for high quality silage



Good quality silage will improve animal performance and reduce concentrate feed costs over the winter.

Do not cut back on first cut fertiliser and rely on delayed cutting to make up the yield difference - it will reduce both yield and quality of silage for the year. Target a late May cut of good yield and quality (early June at the latest if grazed before closing).

An average first cut silage crop needs at least 100 kg N per hectare (80 units per acre) including slurry, and 18-20 kg P plus 90-100 kg K to feed the crop.



### Apply fertiliser N now

65% of annual grass is grown before the end of June - adequate fertiliser N is required to achieve the grass growth potential.

Making up feed deficits is harder later in the year as response to fertiliser N is lower than in April and May.

Soil temperatures are now averaging 8°C or higher. With daylight hours also increasing the conditions for grass growth are good - apply fertiliser N to required levels now.

Plan to apply lime on low pH soils as soon as possible, after first cut silage is a good opportunity.

### Tillage Incentive Scheme (TIS)

*There is still time to avail of the Tillage Incentive Scheme (TIS) worth €400/ha*

#### What do you need to do?

- Increase your tillage area of eligible crops in 2022 compared to 2021
- The increased area must come from ploughed grassland

Spring barley can still achieve good yields when sown up to mid-April. A 6.5 t/ha (2.6t/ac) spring barley can return a margin of €800/ha (including TIS)

The National Fodder and Food Security Committee is tasked by government with preparing an industry response, contingency plans and advice to assist farmers in managing their farm enterprises through a period of high input price inflation and potential supply pressures. Supports and advice are available to all farmers through your Teagasc advisor, at your local Teagasc advisory office or on [www.teagasc.ie/feedsecurity](http://www.teagasc.ie/feedsecurity)

### Multi-Species Swards & Red Clover

*Farmers can now avail of the Red Clover Silage Measure and the Multi Species Sward Measure*

For both measures, once approved, a payment of €50 per 12kg bag of multi-species seed or red clover silage sward seed purchased (up to the approved maximum) will be made to the Co-op/Agri-retailer and deducted from the price paid by the farmer.

Seed must be purchased by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022. Apply online at [www.agfood.ie](http://www.agfood.ie) by 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022.