



NUGGET

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NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2018 - FODDER CRISIS EDITION

10m Silage Bale Shortfall

Irish farmers are facing a shortfall of 10m silage bales this winter. Feed bills continue to mount as grass growth remains slow. Take action **early** to address on-farm fodder shortages. A survey found 75% of farms do not have sufficient winter fodder reserves while 75% are currently feeding grass silage. We urge all farmers to establish what winter forage is available & where deficits are identified, put a plan in place **NOW**.

See enclosed letter from Teagasc with some very useful management tips.

Cattle Slaughter numbers 2018 vs 2017

- The total beef kill up to July 2018 was approx. 1 million head. Compared to 964,350 head in the same period 2017. This is a difference of 36,000 extra so for this year.
- The greatest increase is seen in the number of Cows & Heifers being slaughtered. Increased culling is taking place on farm in order to reduce the demand on forage.

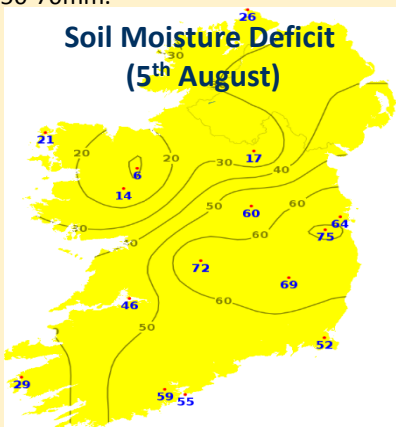
Nationwide Fodder Conservation

During the good weather in May, farmers seized the opportunity to cut 1st cut silage, resulting in good quality but relatively low quantity silage. Most had planned to take 2nd & 3rd cuts later in the year but the drought has hampered such plans, leaving much less winter forage than originally planned.

- A Teagasc national fodder survey in June showed deficits in the midlands were 18% but the situation has deteriorated during July. Action needs to be taken **NOW** to ensure there is enough feed on farm for the winter months.

Current Soil Moisture deficits

- Recent rainfall has reduced soil moisture deficits in many parts. But, high temperatures last weekend will have added to SMD's. SMD's will remain high in Leinster, between 50-70mm.



Do you or your neighbour have under-utilised Grassland? - Contract Grass Growing

Approach farmers who may have under-utilised grassland. An arrangement can be made whereby your neighbour agrees to lease a field for a late Autumn silage cut. You incur all costs & pay the landowner based on the number of bales made. Example, you could harvest at least 6 bales/acre of silage by late Autumn. The cost of fertiliser/baling should not exceed €20 per bale in most situations, if you guarantee your neighbour approx. €13-15/bale, they will earn €78-90/acre & you have a bale of silage for €33-35/bale.

At a fresh weight of 750kg/bale & 25% Dry Matter (DM) you get 188 kg grass DM for €35 = €186/tonne/DM.

If this arrangement interests you, Teagasc have drawn up a template contract which is available locally or online.

The key message to take from this publication is: If you are in any way concerned about how you are covered for feed/forage supplies or indeed credit facilities over the next 6 to 8 months, we are imploring you to **ACT NOW**.

It is critically important to do:

1. **A Fodder Budget:** It is an absolute must. Contact Teagasc or any of our technical team to help.
2. **A worst-case scenario in terms of credit facilities** over the winter. Talk to your bank & if needed come talk to us. We fully recognize that this crisis is putting extra pressures on people & extra credit will be needed by many of our customers. The earlier you talk to us, the better chance we have of being able to offer extra facilities.
3. **Get clarity in terms of the impact of all this on your cross compliance obligations.** Any extra feed & fertiliser purchased, stock movements to rented forage crops will have some impact on your nutrient plans & cross-compliance obligations. The last thing you will need at the end of this winter is a fine for non-compliance.

MOST IMPORTANTLY: If you are unduly worried about your own farming situation, do not bottle it up.

Talk to someone.



€2.75m Government Scheme for Tillage Farmers to Grow Fodder

The Department of Agriculture is to support growing of catch crops by tillage farmers to plug the fodder gap. The payment is available to tillage farmers growing between 3ha and 50ha of additional temporary forage crops (additional to that already grown under GLAS). €155/ha for temporary crop of short rotation grasses for fodder production over the winter months & €100/ha for catch crops such as fodder rape, turnips etc.

Crop option after cereals	Redstart	Rape	Westerwolds
Optimum Sowing date	ASAP	August 15 th to Sept 15 th	ASAP
Potential yield (Tonnes/Acre/Dry matter)	2.8	2	1t (5bales) before end of year and 1t at grazing end of Feb next year before ploughing for spring crop.
Seed Rate (kg/acre Broadcast)	3.5	4	15
Base fertiliser (bags/acre)	2 x 13-6-20	1 x 13-6-20	3 x 18-6-12
Topdress fertiliser (bags/acre)	2 CAN + S	1.5 CAN +S	-
Eliminate volunteer cereals if present	0.6lt/acre Stratos ultra	0.6lt/acre Stratos ultra	-
Cost to produce crop after cereals	€174	€138	€250 (Includes making 5 bales of silage)
Cost per tonne of DM	€62	€69	€125

- Potential yield increase of 40% as soil temperatures are much higher than other years.
- No land should be left in stubble until next spring. Sow fodder crops to boost income and produce fodder for neighbouring livestock farmers.

Short Term Leys

Important Points on growing brassica crops

- Good establishment is absolutely vital.
- Seedbed must be very firm to conserve moisture.
- Deal with cereal volunteers early.

- Westerwolds can yield 15t of DM/ha for 1 year.
- Italian Ryegrass leys lasts for up to 3 years.
- Hybrid grass leys lasts for up to 5 years.
- Annual, Italian & Hybrid grasses are multi-cut swards.

Management Options to Consider

Culling

- Sooner rather than later is the best approach
- Culling early will help save winter forage

Finishing Early

- Steers consume the equivalent of 1 bale of silage per month on a diet of 5kg concentrate + grass VS an ad-lib diet with some straw/hay for fibre.

Importance of fibre

- Vital in keeping the digestive system in good health.
- Ideally livestock need 50% of their dry matter intake in the form of long fibre.
- Animals for slaughter can have 10-15% Fibre on a short term basis

Spreading Fertiliser

Grazing ground

- Spread a high Nitrogen N,P & K compound + sulphur
- Aim to spread 27 units of N/acre.
- Consider applying another 20-30 units N/acre in 3-4 weeks.

Silage Ground

- 2nd Cut Silage ground which was subsequently grazed, spread 40 units/acre of N + S
- For 3rd cut silage spread 50 units/acre of N in a compound with sulphur if within Nitrates limit.

Restricted feeding

If grassland produces half of normal growth in August and normal growth for September to November, it can be expected to grow 4t of Dry Matter/Ha between now and the end of November. The table below outlines how much silage can be conserved on the milking platform.

Example: 40 hectares stocked at 2 LU/ha with 4kg concentrates, 7.4t (40Ha X 185kg) silage can be saved)

Concentrate Supplement (Kg/head/day)	Silage saved (kg/Ha) based on concentrate supplementation & Stocking Rate		
	Stocking Rate (LU/Ha)		
	2.0 LU/Ha	2.5 LU/Ha	3.0 LU/Ha
4	185kg	0	1t of silage needed/cow
6	280kg	135kg	0
8	375kg	250kg	135kg

