



Discuss your silage analysis needs today!

By Aisling Claffey - (B. Agri. Sc., Ph. D.) - Tel: 086 031 7483

Silage sampling will be more valuable than ever this year, after a costly and challenging production season in a falling milk price market, and difficult weather conditions over the summer months. Most farms were heavily reliant on silage throughout March and April last spring, with yield, milk protein and body condition suffering in many places as a result, as energy intake was suppressed when cows were at peak production.

Understanding the quality of silage in your yard will support decision making over the coming months:

- Do cows need a longer dry period to achieve optimum BCS for calving? (see table below).
- What proportion of youngstock are on target for breeding? Do some or all need to be supplemented over the winter to maintain growth rates?
- Have I sufficient good quality silage (72 DMD +) to buffer feed in early lactation? This is even more pressing in autumn calving herds and heavier farms where a greater proportion of silage makes up the diet for early lactation.

The following table outlines feed requirements based on silage quality, BCS and dry period – early analysis of silage will allow you to factor this into your dry off program.

Silage DMD	BCS < 2.5 12-14 weeks dry	BCS 2.5-3.0 8-10 weeks dry	BCS > 3.0 8 weeks dry
72	Silage + 1kg	Silage Ad-lib	Silage restricted
68	Silage + 2kg	Silage + 1kg	Silage Ad-lib
64	Silage + 3kg	Silage + 2kg	Silage Ad-lib
60	Silage + 4kg	Silage + 3kg	Silage + 1kg

To utilise poorer quality silage in the dry cow period, cows must be in optimum BCS of 3.0+ at drying off. With delayed harvest dates, and broken weather both quality and intake parameters may be affected, therefore it is critical to identify thin cows on time and take appropriate action to improve BCS in advance of drying off. Condition can easily slip in herds during periods of persistent wet weather due to DMI being affected, high protein levels in the grass (energy cost to breakdown and excrete) and meal feeding being reduced to cut costs.

Contact your rep to discuss your silage sampling needs asap!



REMINDER TO ALL FARMERS THAT THEY MUST REGISTER FOR THE NATIONAL FERTILISER DATABASE IN THE AGFOOD PORTAL BY SEPTEMBER 1ST TO LEGALLY PURCHASE FERTILISER. ALL FERTILISER SALES FROM SEPTEMBER 1ST WILL BE RECORDED IN THE DATABASE.

HARVEST UPDATE

By Paul Mooney - (B. Agri. Sc.) – 086 353 2342

Between the showers, the harvest has been ongoing. It's a struggle but good progress is being made.

Winter Barley: Yields have been good despite poor sowing conditions and poor growing conditions in Spring. It got sun at the correct stage in June which greatly helped the crop.

Winter Wheat: It had huge potential but a dull-wet July greatly reduced grain fill which led to yields being back approx. 1 tonne on 2022. Crops have struggled to do 4t/acre which has been disappointing.

Spring Barley: It had a disaster of a growing period but amazingly yields are good. 3 tonne crops have been achieved. Lodging has effected almost every field and leads us to believe that the nitrogen was never taken up until rain came in July and made crops soft and heavy very quickly. Current varieties of spring barley have the potential to do well over 3 tonnes, so growth regulator needs to be applied to almost every crop going forward. It creates better rooting and strengthens the stem. Lot of ear disease, partly due to reduced final fungicides. It always pays to put a very good final spray on crops and this year has really proven it.

Oats: Both winter and spring have yielded well. Oats appear to stand up to wet weather during grain fill better than wheat or barley.

Grass Reseeding

There's still time to reseed, up to mid-September. To date there has been very little reseeding this year due to weather. There's a good build-up of grass on farm now so there should be a chance to reseed some old and worn pastures. It's one of the best investments you can make on farm.

- Cost recovered in 2 years
- 8% more milk production
- 5-20% more productive swards
- 25% more response to applied nitrogen.
- Better spring and autumn growth equals extended grazing season.
- Access to newest and best varieties.
- Higher stocking rates.
- Increased feed intakes due to more palatable varieties.

Grennan's Sweet Graze: The best Grazing mix available. Delivers high yield and high utilization keeping your grazing platform ahead of the rest.

Grennan's Hi Digestibility: A grazing mix totally based on the highest possible utilization, giving you the ultimate in graze outs through compromising a small amount of yield.

Grennan's Cut 'n' Graze: Delivers you a high yield of quality 1st cut silage at the end of May followed by grazing.



SOIL SAMPLES ARE NOW A REQUIREMENT FOR ALL TILLAGE GROUND AND THOSE STOCKED AT 130 KG N/HA OR GREATER UNDER THE NITRATES DIRECTIVE. FARM EYE WILL PROVIDE A FULL SOIL SAMPLING AND FARM MAPPING SERVICE OR YOU CAN HIRE A SOIL CORE FROM ANY OF OUR BRANCHES TO GET YOUR SOIL SAMPLES UP TO DATE!



TARGET WEIGHTS FOR REPLACEMENT HEIFERS

By Joe Naughton - (B. Agr. Sc.) – Tel: 086 145 2586

To truly understand if your replacements are on target or not, we need to understand their genetic potential, preferably on an individual basis. The maintenance sub-index within the EBI is calculated using cow liveweights and is used as a prediction of maintenance feed intake costs for dairy cows. It can also be used to determine the projected mature body weight of an individual animal. A higher maintenance sub-index is associated with a lighter cow liveweight. Most heifers have a maintenance sub index of between €0 and €20.

Maintenance SI	€0	€10	€20	€30 (JeX)
Proj. Mature BW kg	640 kg	590 kg	545 kg	500 kg
Target BW calving	580 kg	530 kg	490 kg	450 kg
Target BW October 1st - in-calf	490 kg	455 kg	420 kg	385 kg
Target BW breeding	385 kg	355 kg	325 kg	300 kg
Target BW October 1st - weanling	235 kg	220 kg	200 kg	185 kg

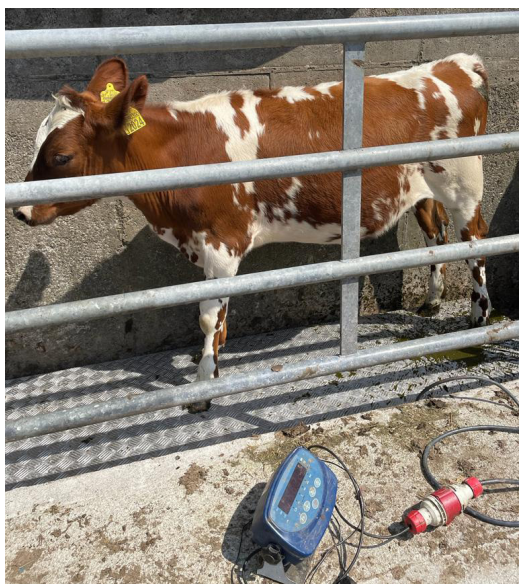
Table: Target weights for February born calves based on their Maintenance value in the EBI report.

If we have two calves both weighing 200 kg on October 1st are we sure they are actually both on target? One could have a predicted mature weight of 640 kg and so is 35kg behind target while the other could have a maintenance value of €20 and be spot on. Many of the herd apps we use to record daily info will show us the 'breed target weight' and the 'EBI target weight' for that individual calf and whether they are on target or not as you record the weights!

To reach these targets, calves at grass for the 1st grazing season need to be gaining 0.8 kg of an average daily gain (ADG). Over the 1st winter weanlings need to be doing 0.5 - 0.6 kg ADG. From turn out to breeding, around May 1st, heifers need an ADG of 1 kg and typically over the Summer/Autumn months and from housing to calving the heifer needs to be gaining 0.7 kg/day. Worm burdens or health challenges during this period or even as a young calf can have serious repercussions on an animal's ability to achieve these ADG.

Failure to achieve the above target weights in replacement heifers has serious negative long-term consequences. One of the main consequences is a 20-25kg milk solid yield reduction per 50kg below target live weight. There are infertility and lifetime survival consequences for heifers below target at breeding. These heifers as less likely to go in calf and heifers that don't reach their pre calving target weight have an increased likelihood of being empty at the end of the 1st and 2nd lactation and therefore survival rate to 3rd lactation is reduced by up to 15%.

It's of vital importance that your replacement heifers meet their target weights and where animals are behind target feed 1-2 kgs of meal to help close the gap, particularly where silage quality isn't sufficient to support weight gain during the housed period.



THE IMPORTANCE OF COPPER SUPPLEMENTATION IN AUTUMN

By Brian Delaney - (B. Agr. Sc.) - Tel: 086 044 9592

Copper deficiency is always a consideration for beef farmers in the Midlands, but there are a few reasons why copper supplementation should be an area of focus in the autumn time. The reason Copper deficiency occurs in the Midlands is not because Copper levels are low in soil or grass but because of the elevated levels of molybdenum which lock up the Copper availability.

Factors which increase Molybdenum intake are:

- Soil moisture - As soil gets wetter in autumn, Molybdenum levels will increase.
- Clover content - Clover levels in the sward peak in autumn and they contain 11 times more Molybdenum than perennial ryegrass
- Soil pH - In high molybdenum areas, the target pH is 6.3 due to molybdenum levels becoming more available as pH increases. This is a key factor after applying lime or where soils are naturally high in pH
- Sulphur levels - Sulphur combines with Molybdenum in the rumen to lock up Copper, overuse of Sulphur on high Molybdenum soils will increase the rate of lock up, mineral test second rotation grass to determine your Sulphur requirements for the season



The table below shows the effect on levels of copper intake by supplementing beef cattle with 20g of 4-way copper per 100kg animal liveweight.

Copper Intake (mg/head/day)	Grass Only	Grass + 4 Way Copper bucket
Weanling	25 mg	125 mg
500 kg store	50 mg	250 mg
Cow	70 mg	350 mg

Healthy Mineral Status Vital for Successful Tupping

A new season is ahead of us and given the harsh spring a lot of sheep had to endure; body condition is more than likely to be below par for a productive tupping phase. As well as flushing, mineral uptake is important to ensure the ewe maximises her fertility and readiness to produce healthy lambs. Phosphorus is probably the most important mineral when it comes to fertility. This is because it is involved in so many aspects of the ewe's performance. These include energy & feed utilisation, protein synthesis, cell growth and of course bone & teeth development. Ewes deficient in phosphorus tend to struggle to produce healthy vibrant lambs as a result.

Selenium (white muscle disease), Cobalt (blood & liver dysfunction) and Zinc (feet & skin health) are the other minerals to be concerned about. Supplementation before tupping is an ideal time to maximise the ewe's potential for a productive season. All farmers know that it all goes well here things are off to a good start.

Topflock's Pre Tup

Topflock's Pre Tup mineral lick has been formulated particularly for this stage, ensuring the ewe gets exactly what she needs at this time. Along with the essential minerals and vitamins there is also fish oils that are important in egg production and foetal development. Direct associations have been made with fish oils and lamb vigour at birth.



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