

SOIL FERTILITY

THE KEY TO GROWING YOUR PROFIT



€
PRODUCTIVE
LAND

1

SOIL TESTING

- Know your soil fertility so you can plan your fertilizer.
- The cost of soil sampling is low relative to the cost of fertilizer.

2

SOIL pH & LIME

- Low pH reduces fertilizer efficiency
- Target pH for grassland = 6.3
- Target pH for tillage = 6.5

3

TARGET INDEX 3 FOR P & K

- Low fertility soils (Index 1 & 2)
⇒ Apply additional fertilizer
- High fertility soils (Index 4)
⇒ A resource and can save you money

5

NUTRIENT BALANCE

- Choose a fertilizer compound that has the correct balance of N, P, K and S.

4

SLURRY & MANURES

- Where to spread?
Apply to fields with a P & K requirement.
- When to spread?
Apply during Spring - cool and moist weather

5 STEPS TO BETTER SOIL FERTILITY

1 SOIL TESTING

- Provides you with vital information about your soils
- A foundation for your fertilizer plan
- A small farm expense costing in the region of €1.25/ha/yr and is valid for 5 years
- A standard soil test will give the soils fertility status as follows; pH, lime requirement, phosphorus (P) and potassium (K).



2 SOIL PH & LIME

- Lime improves the availability of Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium, Sulphur, Calcium and Magnesium
- Lime at least every 5 years
- Ground limestone can be spread at any time
- Apply lime as per soil test report. Avoid over-liming as it can result in trace element imbalances.



3 TARGET INDEX 3 FOR P & K

- Index 3 is the optimum level for crop growth
- Only by soil testing will you know your P & K levels
- Index 4 soils (high fertility) are a resource - use them to save money on fertilizer
- Index 1 and 2 soils (low fertility) need additional nutrients
- Monitor your soil fertility by looking at previous analysis.



4 SLURRY & MANURES

- Plan when and where slurry/manure will be best utilised
- Aim to apply slurry in spring during moist cool conditions
- Apply slurry and manures on land that requires P & K
- Take account of nutrients contained in slurry if applying chemical fertilizer to the same area
- Always observe buffer zones from watercourses and wells.



5 NUTRIENT BALANCE

- Develop a fertilizer plan for your farm
- Get the best value from fertilisers and organic manure
- Enhance crop yield and animal performance
- Reduce environmental risks due to field losses of excess nutrients
- Potential cost savings when all nutrient inputs are accounted for.

