

“Whats the point of getting my silage analysed?”

Getting your silage analysed will help you in your decisions in providing the correct feed to all classes of stock- eg what dry cows, sucklers, stores or growing calves need. Silage analysis will also help you buy the right concentrates and supplements and will give advance warning of any ‘problems’ e.g

- spoilage/wastage
- intakes
- lack of energy/protein

“How important is phosphate and potash?”

Very important. Phosphate is linked to root growth; it promotes early season grass; improves response to nitrogen; promotes rapid establishment of new seedlings; and is key to the survival of clover.

Potash and nitrogen are linked in terms of uptake and conversion of N to grass yield; if potash is limiting the uptake and use grass makes of N will be restricted. It also affects the conversion of nitrate N to protein so total protein yield will be limiting if potash is deficient. Sufficient potash also aids earlier spring growth, makes for denser more vigorous swards, quicker aftermath growth and is essential if the full potential of clover to the sward is to be realised.

“What options are there for reducing fertiliser costs?”

There’s a few- some are considering going organic! Others are buying less fertiliser- but you will grow less grass by doing this. Buying cheaper fertiliser is another but you have to look out for poor quality which reduces the efficiency it spreads at and works at. Its really important to think not just about fertiliser but about improving nutrient use efficiency overall and that means checking your soils, sward quality, how you apply the product you’re using as well as your product choice. It goes without saying that growing more clover to provide the nitrogen grass needs and making better use of the muck and slurry you have available through targeted applications to the right fields at the right time of year are also really important nutrient management strategies that will help reduce overall fertiliser costs