

“How do I decide what forage crop to grow?”

You need to grow what's cost effective and fits in with your system: e.g a simple system of grass, silage and purchased concentrates or mixed diets with home grown forage? What proportion of the winter are you housing for? Do you extend the grazing into late Autumn / early winter? How are you going to utilise the crop: graze in situ; cut, lift, store; ensile; crimp it? Choice depends on the type of farm e.g. soil type, ability to carry stock outside, area available, the stock being fed and method of feeding. Last but not least, compare the cost of production on a kg dry matter basis compared to the cost of concentrates or alternatives bought in.

“I'm not sure what the best time of year to apply lime is?”

You can apply lime any time of the year but its probably more sensible to put it on in the Autumn. This will give it time to work its way down through the soil and change the pH so that the grass can make more efficient use of nutrients in the spring. You don't have to wait until you cultivate for a new reseed or sowing to apply lime although it makes sense to correct pH ahead of a new re-seed.