

## **100% Organic Feed Regulation - Minimise Costs of Feeding Livestock**

There has been much debate about how we are all to meet the 100% organic feed regulation this winter and how best to minimise costs of feeding livestock. Possible solutions include wider use of grazed forage crops as highlighted on Rhydcrew demonstration farm; and feeding balanced rations based on silage and other forage analyses - an ongoing theme with many discussion groups. GDC at IGER has sampled many different forages over this winter as part of its Farming Connect activities and the results indicate a big range in quality.

Organic big bales sampled were all well made with very low ammonia, butyric acid and average ash, while clamp silage was more variable with some higher butyric values and less well fermented silages. The nutritional values are summarized below and illustrate the importance of knowing how much energy and protein is in the forage if a balanced diet is to be fed to meet the needs of livestock.

### **Organic silage samples 2007/8**

Grass/clover	DM	D value	ME	CP
Bale - average	49	59	9.5	10.4
range	44-56	56-65	9-10.3	9.6-11.7
Clamp average	32	62	9.8	12.7
range	24-41	59-66	9.4-10.6	10.9-13.7
Wholecrop - Average	46	63	9.8	12.9
range	32-66	62-72	8.7-11.2	11.8-14.1

Grassland Development Centre is involved in a research study to look at the biodiversity and other beneficial impacts of organic farming in the LFA, and recently held the Welsh regional workshop at IGER for this project. Although at early stages and without any ecological results yet, it was useful to discuss with stakeholders, some key issues to be considered with the agri-environment schemes of the future, including the benefits of organic farming.