

## FAQ's: Pumsaint Nov '10

### Q1. How can I improve the quality of my silage from existing leys?

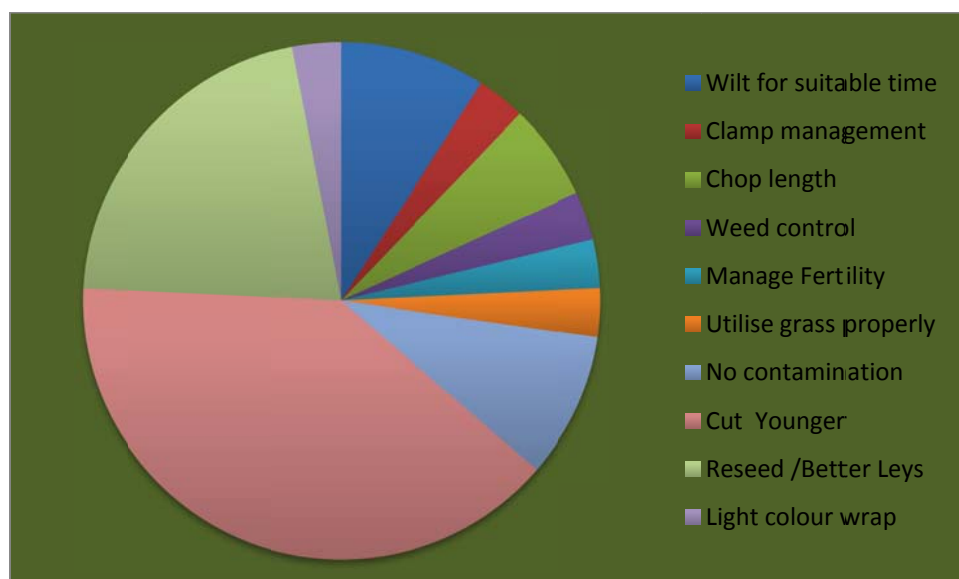
There are a whole range of ways to improve the quality from existing leys, these include:

- Aim to cut when grass is at ideal maturity to make sure sugar levels are optimum
- Avoid contamination by slurry or FYM
- Make sure that soluble fertiliser has been taken up by the plant and that N applied is not too high as this can result in high nitrate and poor fermentation
- Attention to detail at harvest to ensure good consolidation
- Use an inoculant on clover rich silage leys
- Maintain good levels of ryegrass and clover in the sward
- Control weeds to reduce levels in the bale or clamp

### Q2. What will members of the Pumsaint group focus on to produce better silage next year?

Members were asked to suggest the 2 things they will change in order to make better silage next year. Cutting at the right stage of growth and improving leys were seen as the top priority from this group

**Pie chart to show the methods the Pumsaint Group plan to adopt to improve silage quality**



### **Q3. When is the best time to cut my silage ley?**

Grass matures and the ratio of stem to leaf increases the digestibility (D-value ) and sugar content (WSC) drops rapidly so it is important to cut at the right time: close for silage for no more than 6-7 weeks to make good quality silages. As a guide leafy growth only (no stems) will be around 72 D, as grass stems start to lengthen silage will be around 68 D and once flower heads have emerged the “D” value will be maximum of 65 D. Remember D value starts to drop by 0.5 units /day once grass starts to bulk up. Cut grasses after midday when the sugars are at their highest leaving a stubble of 2.5-3 inches