



**Sheep Open day**

**July 24<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**Hosted on the farm of**

**John Curley,**

**Four Roads**

**Co Roscommon**

**STAP Approved National Event**

## Introduction

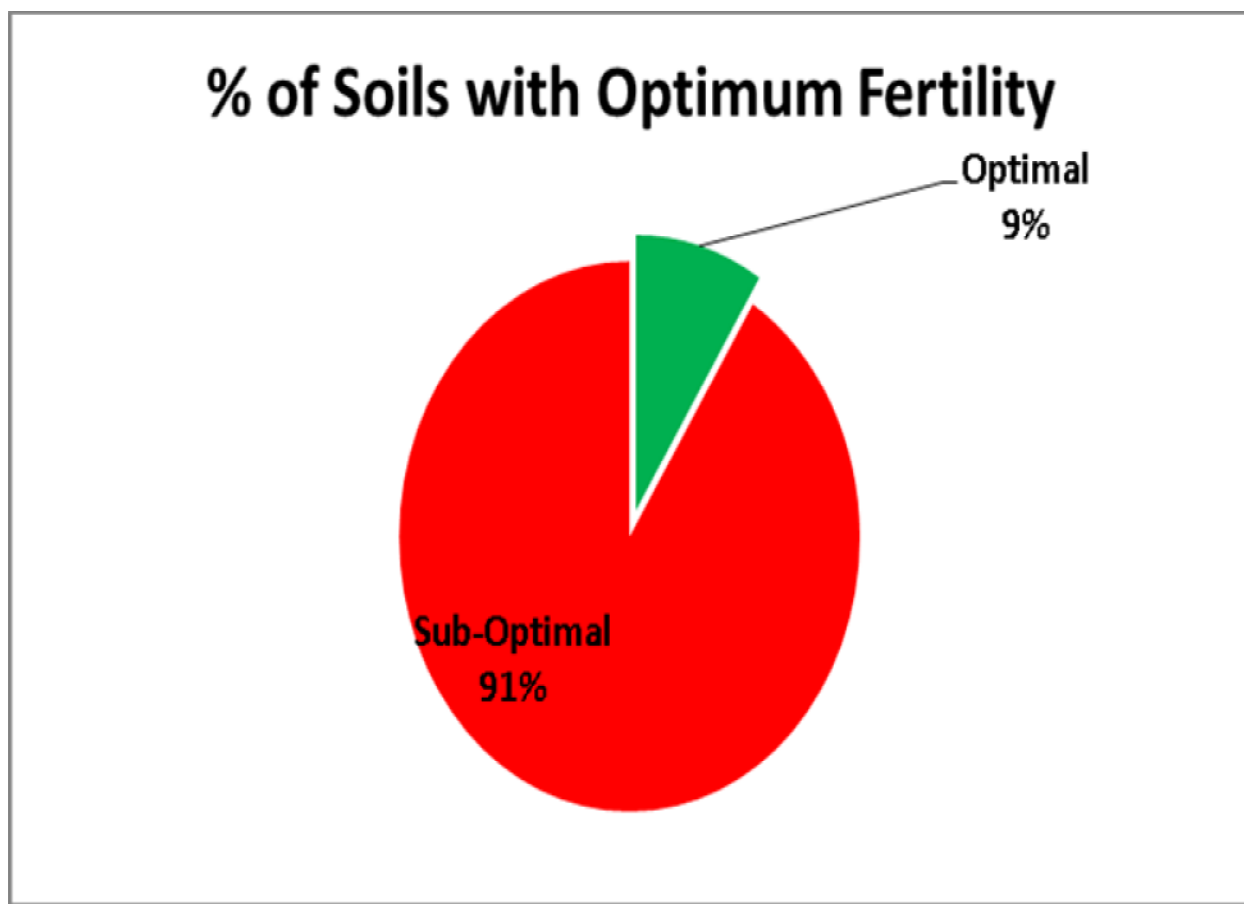
Today's Open day will focus on a how you can achieve more productivity from grassland and the stock that graze it. For today's event there are 5 stands in total. Each will provide an opportunity to engage with the various speakers on a range of topics At the event a number of key areas will be discussed in detail. Firstly the topic of soil fertility will be examined with practical information on the key steps needed to address potential issues on farms. Following on from this a key feature of the event will show a practical demonstration of 3 different regimes of reseeded at 2 stages – (1) following its first grazing and (2) just reseeded. Advice on correct protocol when reseeded and information on selecting high performing varieties will be discussed. The area of grazing management and lamb performance during the post weaning period will be examined in detail, As too will be the area of genetic improvement and using Eurostar indices to inform ram purchasing decisions. Lastly, potential flock vaccinations will be considered as autumn and the lead up to the breeding season approaches.

These are all areas that the host farmer John Curley has focused on improving over the past number of years. At many of the public events held on the farm in previous years John has shown how these changes have impacted on his farming system. The farm is available to host visiting groups during the year. For groups interested in visiting the farm can do so by making contact through their facilitator with the local Teagasc office in Roscommon. Lastly we would like to show out appreciation.

This is a national qualifying event for the Sheep Technology Adoption Programme (STAP) and we would encourage participants to ensure they register at the start of the event. Registration is on site.



## Soil Fertility



**Figure 1.** Summary of Samples submitted for analysis in 2014

### **Soil fertility Targets for Sheep farms**

- Lime
  - Target pH 6.3
  - Release 60 to 80kgN/ha
  - Worth €60 to 80/ha/year
- P & K
  - Target Index 3
  - Select suitable fertiliser
  - Target FYM

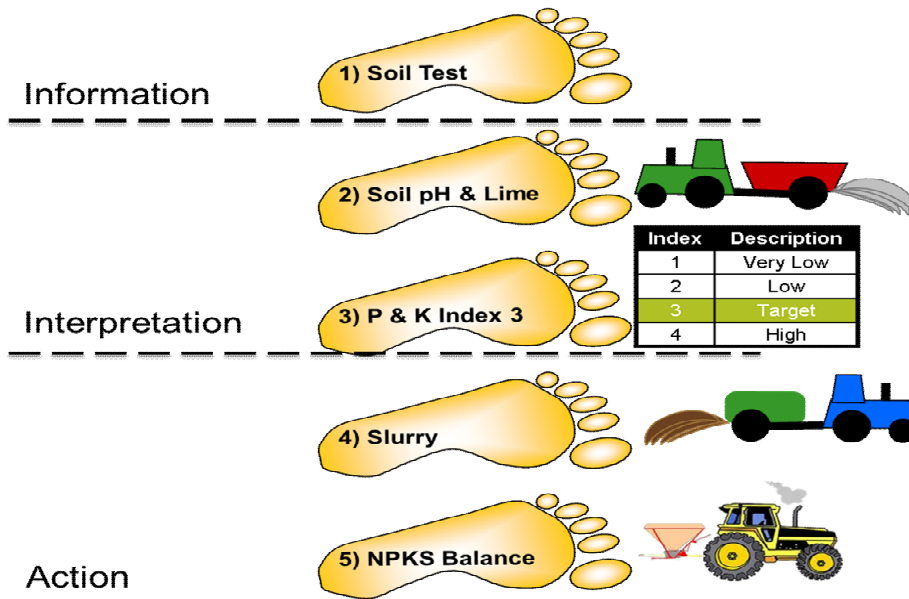
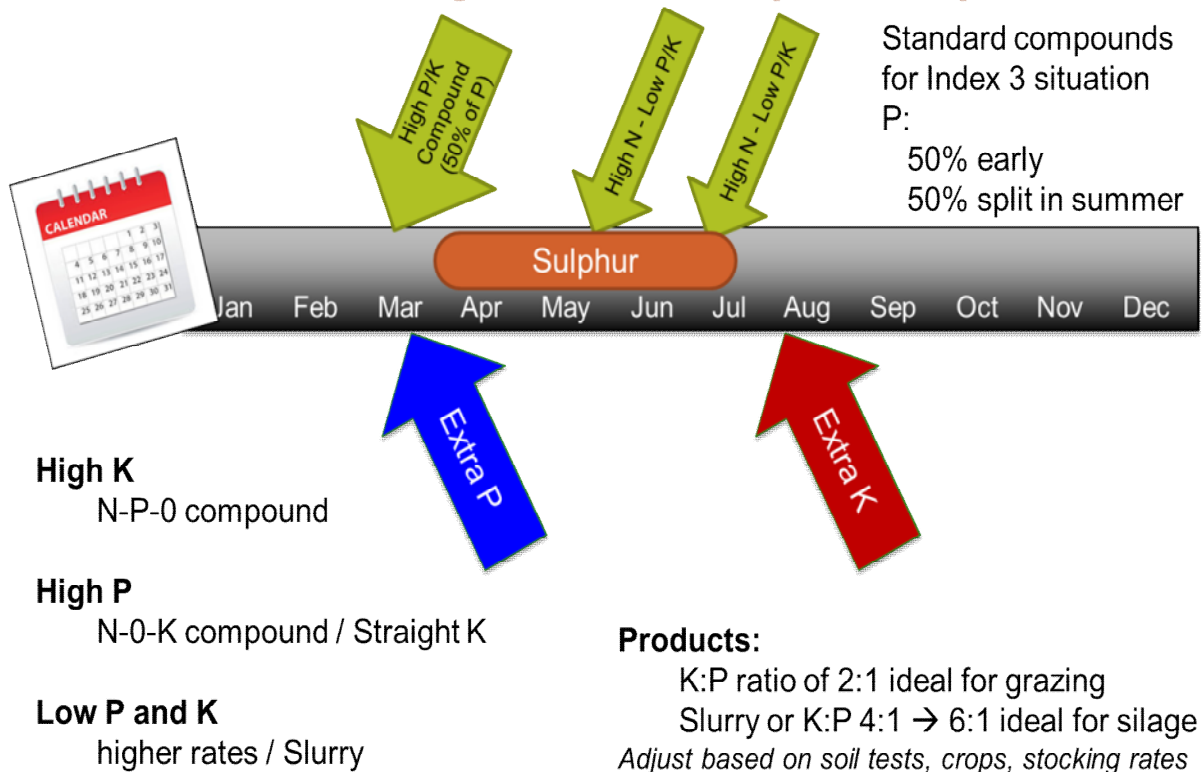


Figure 2. Key steps in improving soil fertility

## Fertiliser programmes (P K S)



## Reseeding

### Comparison of reseeding methods

- Study carried out to investigate reseeding methods

• Plough	• Disc + Onepass	• One pass	• Direct Drill
• 1.0	• 1.0	• 0.94	• 0.87

- All methods effective
- All swards required time to establish/settle

### Timing

- Currently focused to the Autumn
- Why Spring?
  - Graze twice, reseed in April, back in June
  - Lose - 3 rotations (60 days) - 4.5-5.5 t DM/ha
  - Gain – offer flock/lambs reseed mid season
  - Productive for remainder of year

### **Reseeding plan**

- Soil test – P, K, lime
- Burn off – roundup or similar
- Cut or graze 5 to 7 days after spraying
- Cultivate 10-14 days after spraying
- Apply lime and fertiliser
- Sow seed into a firm seed bed

### **Post sowing management**

- Post emergence spray 5-8 weeks after reseeding
- Best time to control docks is after reseeding
- Graze as soon as new plants are strong enough
- Frequent light grazing ( $\leq 1400$  kg DM/ha)
- Check for slugs/leatherjacket attack
- If possible avoid cutting for silage in first year

#### Grass mix used

Variety	Kg
Abergain	4
Aberchoice	4
Drumbo	4
Clover	1.5

### Grazing setup and management

#### **Paddock system/Rotational grazing**

=Control, Utilisation, Quality

- Rotation grazing - Min 5 Paddocks per grazing group
- Provide high quality leafy grass

#### **Grass year starts in Autumn**

- closing from early November

#### **Spring – Early Nitrogen**

- Tight Grazing (3.5 – 4.0cm March/April)

#### **Mid-Season**

- Quality v quantity
- Pre graze = 7- 9cm
- Leaf = digestibility
- 4.5-5.0cm post grazing height

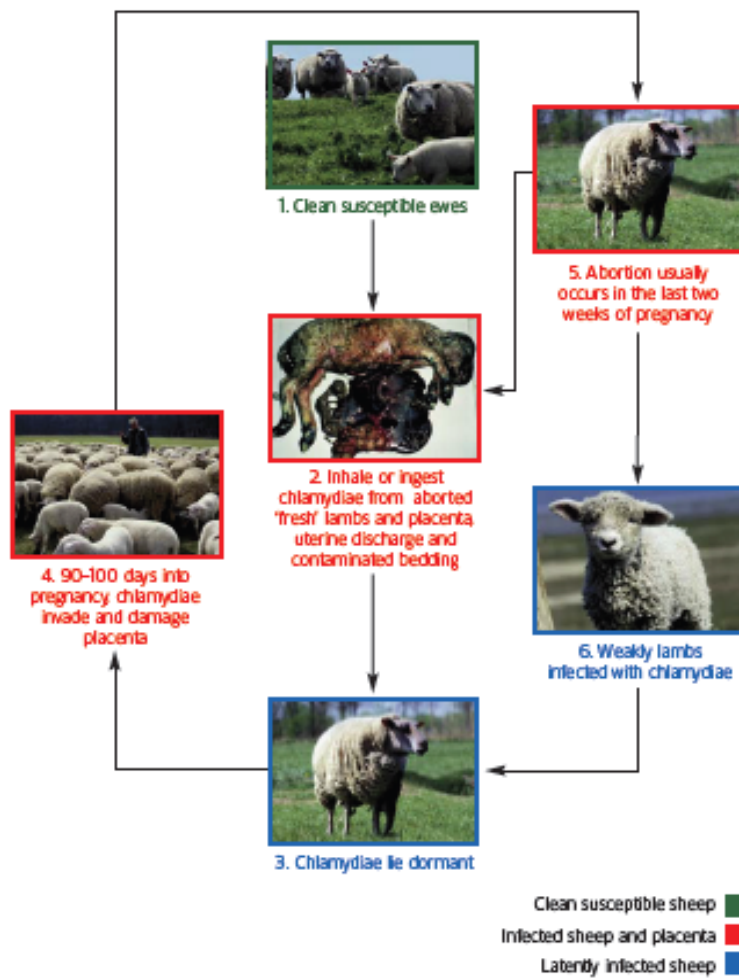
#### **Grass measurement/budgeting**

- Many different methods/ways
- Information to aid decisions
- Grassland management = Business management

**Table 1. Effect of lamb weaning weight and post weaning performance on sale date**

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Lamb Weight (kg)</b>	<b>225 g/day</b>	<b>175 g/day</b>	<b>125 g/day</b>	<b>75 g/day</b>
<b>36</b>	<b>10-Aug</b>	<b>15-Aug</b>	<b>21-Aug</b>	<b>30-Aug</b>
<b>34</b>	<b>18-Aug</b>	<b>1-Sep</b>	<b>27-Sep</b>	<b>24-Nov</b>
<b>32</b>	<b>27-Aug</b>	<b>13-Sep</b>	<b>13-Oct</b>	<b>21-Dec</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>05-Sep</b>	<b>24-Sep</b>	<b>29-Oct</b>	<b>17-Jan</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>14-Sep</b>	<b>6-Oct</b>	<b>14-Nov</b>	<b>12-Feb</b>

- Lamb performance post weaning has a major impact on drafting date
- Good grassland management is essential to attain high performance
- Concentrate supplementation may be necessary
- Store lamb option should be considered for lighter lambs



Agent	Control
<b>Toxoplasma gondii</b>	Vaccinate all replacements with Toxovax at least 3 weeks before mating.
<b>EAE</b>	Vaccinate all ewes (replacements and aborted ewes retained) with Enzovax at least 4 weeks before mating.
<b>Campylobacter</b>	Isolation during outbreak & broad spectrum antibiotics . Immunity long lasting.
<b>Listeria</b>	Good quality silage.
<b>Leptospira</b>	Depending on the strain concerned, consider vaccinating with the bovine vaccine. Anecdotal information suggests this may be worthwhile.
<b>Salmonella</b>	Antibiotics can be useful but abortion usually seen several weeks after infection occurred. Maintain good hygiene standards. Depending on the strain concerned, consider vaccinating with the bovine vaccine. Anecdotal information suggests this may be worthwhile.
<b>Border disease</b>	If disease newly introduced to flock ensure lamb crop reared for slaughter to reduce risk of retaining P.I. sheep. Slaughter carrier P.I. sheep. In infected flock, mix replacements with rest of flock for 3-6 weeks at least 2 months before mating.