

Teagasc Notes for week ended Friday October 25th 2019

Feeding livestock without silage analysis, is like working in the dark

A crop of 400 tonne of silage will have cost you, the farmer, a minimum of €10,000. An investment of €33 in silage analysis is a small and worthwhile investment so that you know exactly where you stand with the quality of your main winter feed source. By knowing the quality of your silage, your local Teagasc adviser can plan and budget the level of supplementation for a given level of performance for all classes of stock on your farm.

Understanding your silage analysis results:

Nutritional Value

Dry matter (%DM):

Silage DM ranges from 15-45%. Optimum for intake is 28-32%. Low values can result in low pH, poor intake. Reduced aerobic stability at very high values

Dry matter Digestibility (%DMD):

Values of 74+ suitable for high performance animals. DMD below 66 is sub-maintenance feed for most classes of stock. Silage at 68-70 DMD adequate for dry cows requiring little body condition gain.

Crude Protein (%C.P.):

Quality silage will have high PDIE (>75g/kg) due to better energy content, with a good balance of PDIN (3-5 units higher). Low PDI values indicate that extra protein supplementation is essential.

Preservation

pH:

Target pH depends on DM content of the ensiled crop. A pH of 3.8 to 4.2 indicates good preservation at <28% DM. Dry/wilted crops (>28% DM) can be well preserved at pH up to 4.5. Wet silage with pH values of > 4.2 are generally poorly preserved. Where silage pH is <3.6, adjust diets to ensure correct rumen pH.

Ammonia:

Values of less than 8-10% show good fermentation with little protein breakdown. Silage ammonia levels above 15% indicate poor preservation and will likely result in feed refusals

Lactic Acid:

Average value is 7.5% of DM. Lactic acid at 8-10% of DM, and >75% of total acids, means excellent preservation. Dry silage can be well preserved at 1-2% of DM lower. Values below 5% mean poor quality.

Contact your local Teagasc office if you would like a silage sample taken and / or want advice on appropriate supplementation of your forages this winter.

People Management Course (4 day Course)

If you are employing labour be it part/full time or will be employing labour in the near future then this course will be of benefit to you. Over all, this course will help you attract and retain employees. On completion you will have developed a People Management Plan for your farming business. In addition, it is expected that participation in this course will:

- Evaluate your current workload and time management
- Improve your communication ability
- Make your farm a better place to work

- Prepare you for recruiting the right person for your farm
- Allow you to have a correct induction process for a new employee on your farm
- Make you aware of the legislative requirements of employment
- Understand your management style and how it impacts on your relationship with your employees

Speakers

- Teagasc Specialist (Day 1)
- Workplace Relations Committee (Day 1)
- Dr. Nollaig Heffernan, Private consultant (Day 2,3,4)

Nollaig Heffernan will lead day 2, 3, 4 of this course. Nollaig brings years of experience in people management and is specialised in: Workplace Psychology including Organisational Re-structuring, Selection and Retention, Stress Management; Business Mentoring; Psychometrics; Sport Psychology.

The course will run over 4 days – 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th of November and is costing €150 per head. Contact your local Teagasc office if you are interested in attending this course.

