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Silage



Producing silage by compacting green fodder and storing it in airtight conditions, typically in a silo, without first being dried, means that livestock can enjoy the benefits of being grass-fed over the winter.

Ryegrass leys

Ryegrass in all its forms has been the building block of short term silage leys for the last 60 years. With the various high yielding types such as westerwolds, Italian, hybrid and perennial lasting between one and five years, there is a ryegrass variety to suit every system. Highly responsive to nitrogen, ryegrass- based swards produce palatable silage that increases milk and meat production.

Red clover leys: With its high yields, forage quality and suitability for silage, red clover swards are playing an increasingly important role in sustainable systems of grassland farming, especially now nitrogen prices are so high. At 19% crude protein, red clover's nutritional value is higher than grass' and its high voluntary intake leads to enhanced animal performance. Thriving on most soils, its ability to 'fix' atmospheric nitrogen in the root nodules (an average of 200kg N/ha), offers a saving on manufactured nitrogen fertiliser.

Red clover is tolerant to winter cold and, due to its deep rooting characteristic, is drought resistant. Used as a break crop it will improve soil structure and fertility while also giving excellent forage yields.

Lucerne: At 20% protein lucerne is an attractive feed. It is a good complement to maize and is leafy and low in fibre, breaking down rapidly in the rumen and passing out quickly, allowing a greater intake of forage than many other species. Lucerne has significant benefits but few people grow it believing, incorrectly, that it is a difficult crop to maintain.

Sainfoin: Sainfoin performs better than any other crop on thin, dry, calcareous and brashy soils. This remarkable plant is extremely drought resistant with its deep-penetrating roots. In addition, it needs no nitrogen fertiliser and very little phosphate. It offers a protein-rich forage with medicinal qualities that will appeal to all types of livestock farmer.

Vetch: This is a short term annual with a high protein and mineral content. Vetch is fast to grow and can be sown alone for silage or grazing and is also suitable for mixing with cereals such as oats for whole-crop silage. Quick to establish, it can also be sown with grass and clover mixes to produce extra yield.

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