

Silage planning starts now...

Making good silage needs a planned approach. There are crucial steps to be carried out and management of these steps will determine the success of your silage.

Spring sward management - "Graze bare before closing up ground to avoid loss in silage digestibility"

Graze out silage ground tightly to remove the "dead butt", which can negatively impact silage digestibility. Apply slurry before grazing where applicable as late slurry application may lead to increased levels of potassium in silage or limit successful preservation. Avoid applying lime on silage ground in the spring. Rolling is important to minimise soil contamination in silage particularly where swards have been grazed in wet conditions.

Spring Fertiliser - "Pick a date and have a plan, 2 units of N per day from spreading to harvest"

Poor soil fertility and low sulphur levels limit the plants ability to utilise nitrogen for protein production. The rule of thumb is that 2 units of nitrogen are used by the crop per day prior to harvesting. Therefore work backwards from your intended harvesting date to calculate the amount of nitrogen required on the date of application. Remember, some nitrogen is still available from slurry and earlier applications of fertiliser so factor this into your nitrogen requirement.

Weed control - "A 10 % dock infestation means you have one full bale or shear grab of docks in every 10"

April is the month to get on top of weeds. Apply a suitable herbicide at the correct weed growth stage (at least 4 weeks prior to silage harvest).

Harvesting Date - "Harvest in mid-May to maximise on digestibility and yield"

Harvest date is the vital step in ensuring highly digestible silage.

Table 1. shows the effect of delaying closing date on silage digestibility. A 65 DMD silage means that only 65% silage which is eaten is digestible, in other words 35 % of your silage is not available for milk or meat production. Silage must be harvested with enough sugars to ensure good preservation. Grass is high in sugar during a period of bright days and cool nights.

Harvest Date	8 May	22 May	29 May	5 June	19 June
Yield (t DM/ha)	3.99	5.96	6.79	7.82	8.93
DMD %	77.9	76.6	74.6	69.2	64.3

Source: Teagasc Grange

Maxi Breeder cubes

Bretts Maxi Breeder Cubes are specifically formulated for feeding to spring calving cows in the lead up to breeding. It is suitable for medium to high yielding dairy cows at grass and has a number of advantages:

- Flexible Feeding Level (3-6 kgs).
- Contains high inclusion of maize, barley and soya hulls.
- Protein content of 14%.
- Contains PIP – Brett's unique Performance Improvement Package.
- Includes a Rumen Buffer, protected minerals and Biotin.

New grass seed range

The new range of grass seed from Bretts has been developed to include only the highest performing grass varieties from the 2015 recommended list and the new Pasture Profit Index. The two seed mixtures will facilitate both intensive grazing and multipurpose swards.



Grain growers visit new grain store

A large gathering of the region's top grain growers were recently in attendance at our Callan branch, where they were given a full overview and tour of our recently expanded grain handling facility. The impressive facility follows a major capital investment programme, which has created a large increase in milling capacity and a highly efficient grain drying, treatment and storage complex.

At the event our chief agronomist, James Irish, outlined the agronomy policy being implemented which is fundamental to producing top quality grain.



Pictured at the tillage open day at Brett Brothers, Callan, Co. Kilkenny are Jimmy Brett, John Moloney, Teagasc, Kilkenny / Waterford Regional Manager, Sam & James Wilson, Lismore.



Pictured at the tillage open day at Brett Brothers, Callan, Co. Kilkenny are Jimmy Purcell, Clonmel, Robert Raftice, Danesfort, Co. Kilkenny, Jimmy Brett & Liam Aherne, Grange, Co. Tipperary.



Pictured are a section of the crowd at the tillage open day at Brett Brothers, Callan, Co. Kilkenny.



Pictured at the tillage open day at Brett Brothers, Callan, Co. Kilkenny are Pat & Will Stokes, Kilsheelan, Jimmy Brett & Andy Doyle, Irish Farmers Journal.

TILLAGE OPEN DAY AT BRETT BROTHERS, CALLAN, CO. KILKENNY



Pictured at the tillage open day at Brett Brothers, Callan, Co. Kilkenny are James Irish, Bretts, Dick O'Shea, Teagasc Kilkenny, Patrick Sullivan, Inistioge & Michael Roche, Inistioge.



Pictured at the tillage open day at Brett Brothers, Callan, Co. Kilkenny are James Irish, Bretts, Philip Kiely, Cahir, Patrick Murphy, Ballylooby, Joe Pollard, Bretts Ardfinnan & Jimmy Purcell, Clonmel.

"We manage and support our farmers in all aspects of growing grain from seed to when the combine enters the field. Our emphasis is on cost control while ensuring not to compromise on quality". James Irish, Chief Agronomist.



Pictured at the tillage open day at Brett Brothers, Callan, Co. Kilkenny are Christy Power, Kilmacthomas, Jack Walsh, Kilmacthomas, James Irish, Bretts & Harry Gray, Stradbally.

TILLAGE OPEN DAY AT BRETT BROTHERS, CALLAN, CO. KILKENNY

"Our grain growers and the Brett businesses are an integral part of the food chain and our model is to add value from farmers' grain to milling and to products on the supermarket shelves in Ireland and in our export markets". Jimmy Brett, Managing Director.



Pictured at the tillage open day at Brett Brothers, Callan, Co. Kilkenny are David Brett, Aidan Brennan, BASF, Tony Nugent, Coolmore, Liam & Betty Casey, Cahir.



Pictured at the tillage open day at Brett Brothers, Callan, Co. Kilkenny are Jimmy Brett, Richard & Thomas Murphy, Ardfinnan & Tim O'Donovan, Teagasc.



Pictured at the tillage open day at Brett Brothers, Callan, Co. Kilkenny are Padraig O'Keefe & Pat Byrne, New Ross, Michael Foley, Bretts & Seamus O'Keefe, New Ross.

Photos O'Gorman Photography.

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