

Guide to completing a Winter Fodder Budget

A recent Teagasc fodder survey has indicated that 27% of dairy farmers are reporting significant fodder deficits. The survey found that overall average fodder stocks after first cut silage stand at 60%, the target should be 70%. Farmers are advised to complete a fodder budget to see what their winter feed requirements are and to assess year to date fertiliser usage against their allowances. This will allow farmers to address shortfalls in their budgets by maximising second and third cuts.

The level of the deficit will vary from farm to farm and this will determine what options are available to you. Less than a 20% deficit and you may look to close some ground for a late second or third cut. Cutting winter demand by selling empty cows or poorer performers before housing may help alleviate the issue also.

Greater than a 20% deficit may mean the purchase of extra forage or feeding extra meal over the winter to stretch available feed.

A combination of all the options may be needed. The important thing is to know where you stand and then you can react in an informed way.

3 steps to completing a simple fodder budget:

STEP 1) Estimate the amount of winter feed required

Animal Type	No. of Animals (A)	Feeding Period (Months) (B)	Silage / Month (C)	Total (Tonnes) (AxBxC)
Dairy Cows				
2-3 s				
1-2 s				
0-1 s				
Other Animals				
Total Tonnes Required				

Feed levels required per month (tonnes)

Animal Type	DM %			
	20%	25%	30%	35%
Dairy Cows	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.1
2-3s	1.5	1.3	1.1	1
1-2s	1.3	1.2	1	.9
0-1s	.7	.6	.5	.4
Other Animals	1.3	1.2	1	.9



WINTER FODDER BUDGET

STEP 2) Calculate the quantity and quality of silage available

(All silage should be tested for DM and quality)

- Measure volume of the silo in cubic metres (m3) = Length (m) x Width (m) x Height (m).
- (To convert from cubic feet to cubic metres => cubic feet figure x 0.0283)
- Correct for the density of the silage in the silo

Grass Silage (DM %)	Fresh Weight Density (t / m3)
20	.77
25	.68
30	.60
35	.54
40	.48
45	.42
Forage Maize (30% DM)	.75

- Example: Silo dimensions: 40 metres long x 10 metres wide x 2 metres high = 800 m3
- At 20 % DM - 800 m3 x 0.77 = 616 tonnes
- At 25 % DM - 800 m3 x 0.68 = 544 tonnes
- To convert bales to tonnes of silage, multiply number of bales by weight of bale. E.g., 230 bales X 0.72 tonnes = 166 tonne

Grass Silage Stocks	Tonnes Available
Pit A	
Pit B	
Pit C	
BALES	
Maize Silage	
Total Tonnes Available	

Step 3) Calculate if farm is in surplus/ deficit scenario and assess the options available

Total Forage Required	
Total Forage Available	
Surplus / Deficit	

For more information or for assistance in completing a fodder budget, contact your local Agri Sales Representative

