

# Multi-cut grass silage 10-point checklist

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## Plan ahead

- Consult your contractor or review your own equipment
- Consider clamp capacity and/or bale storage area
- Set targets for timing, tonnage and quality
- Test soils and slurry over the winter period

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## Reseed to maintain leys fit for purpose

- Maintain high sown species content and ground cover
- Grow mixtures with high yielding varieties, good spring growth and high ME yield/ha
- Only select varieties from Recommended Grass & Clover Lists (RGCL)

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## Over-winter swards with optimum cover

- Remove autumn grazing stock by end of December with sward height at 4-5cm
- Walk silage fields to check drainage, mole damage and weed content
- Apply slurry into the soil, not onto the sward, to a maximum of 25,000l/ha

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## Ensure correct crop nutrition

- Avoid heavy slurry applications within 10 weeks of cutting
- Apply any slurry into the soil immediately fields are cleared
- Apply bagged fertiliser as recommended by an agronomist but not exceeding 2 units/acre for each growing day between cuts

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## Cut early and frequently

- Take first cuts late April - early May (depending on season and location) to maximise ME yield
- Take subsequent cuts at intervals of 4 to 5 weeks to maintain quality
- Mow no lower than 6.5 cm to ensure rapid regrowth

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### Wilt quickly for optimum dry matter

- Cut early in the day with a mower with an effective integral conditioner
- Ted out the crop within two hours to maximise speed of drying
- Aim to pick up the same day for a target 28 - 32% DM silage

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### Apply a proven silage additive to improve fermentation

- Because protein and nitrates may be higher – which buffer the fermentation
- Select an additive containing the most efficient fermentation bacteria

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### Chop long to maintain structural fibre

- Consider a chop length of 5cm or longer for good clamp management
- The typical chop length of a forage wagon can work well with multi-cut

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### Ensile for the best possible fermentation

- Apply best practice approach when clamping or baling
- Roll or compact to squeeze out air
- Seal effectively to maintain airtight conditions
- Ensile in layers to maximise compaction

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### Feed fibre as needed to balance rations

- Ensure sufficient 'scratch factor' for optimum rumen function
- Consult your nutritionist to maximise value of higher energy grass silage

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