

## Planning for a successful autumn – What to consider.

Christmas has passed and as we enter the middle of summer it is worthwhile looking forward to what we need to do to ensure a good start to the autumn season. Sure Mother Nature providing good weather conditions with a bucket load of early rain will help but have you considered some of the other factors that you can actually control.

Soil testing poor performing paddocks? Now might be the best time to get in and find out if fertility or pH levels are holding back the paddock that doesn't seem to quite grow like the others. Maybe even test your best paddocks to see what the difference is.

Do you need to look at putting in place a regular lime program? If you lime a quarter of your farm each year you will cover the whole farm over 4 years rather than trying to do the whole farm in one big hit. For example a 200ha farm applying lime at 2.5t per ha would cost an estimated \$45,000 at \$90 per tonne spread GST incl. If you split that cost over 4 years it is \$11,250 and may be easier on cash flow and something that you are able to do regularly rather than only when things are good.

What cultivation and sowing techniques are you going to use on crop and summer sacrifice paddocks. Are you going to spray them out or just direct drill, them and what pest do you need to look out for. We have seen a lot of lucerne flea activity in late spring 2015, do you need to make sure your clover seed is gaucho treated for early protection and then an insecticide added to your broadleaf sprays.

Identifying paddocks that need to be renovated or over sowed. Why do they need renovating and will that change your decision on whether you put in an annual or perennial variety. Is the paddock going to be cropped in the coming spring and therefore you need an early annual variety that you can get a cut off before putting a crop in early. Is the paddock still level but just needs thickening up of the perennial base.

Which paddocks had a high broadleaf weed burden and need an early selective herbicide spray to counter any emerging weeds early in the season before they compete with the existing and new sown pasture. The earlier you can get broadleaf weeds the better your new pasture will establish and the less recurrence you will see in future years.

What is your fert plan for the year? Are you going to put super potash on in the autumn or are you going to use NPKS blends through the year or a combination of both. You can sit down with your Agronomist and work out what is not only economical but practical for you and your farm.