

First-cut grass silage averages 2015

Results of this year's first-cut silage analysis suggest a better quality crop than last year. The light frosts seen through March and April meant grass growth was delayed, so quality was maintained for longer. Plus the fine weather seen at harvest meant a good quality crop was produced, even if quantity was slightly down on last year.



Initial first-cut grass silage analysis for 2015 (compared with 2014 figures)

Component	Description	Averages			
		2014	2015	Min	Max
Dry Matter (%)	Measure of what is not water	29	30.2	16.4	54.8
Crude Protein (%)	Measure of protein content	13.7	14.2	7.0	22.1
Digestibility (%) (D value)	Measure of percentage of feed that is digestible by the animal	66.9	68.3	58.1	75.8
Energy (ME MJ/KG/DM)	Measure of usable energy available to the animal	10.7	10.9	9.3	12.1
pH	Measure of acidity	3.9	3.9	3.5	4.8
Sugar (%)	Measure of sugar content	3.3	3.5	0.2	9.4
Ash (%)	Measure of mineral and trace element content	8.0	8.8	5.6	11.3

Source: Trouw Nutrition GB

A slightly higher dry matter content was seen this year, rising from 29% in 2014 to 30% in 2015. Furthermore, energy levels and crude protein content also increased slightly.

However, the results show that there is a large range in the minimum and maximum values, highlighting a big variation in silage quality across the country. This is likely to be seen most years and should be an area of focus.

How much does silage cost to produce?

You can calculate how much your silage has cost to establish and produce using the BRP Forage Costs Calculator, available on the [AHDB Beef & Lamb website](http://ahdb.org.uk).

This simple tool allows farmers to calculate the forage costs per hectare, per acre or per tonne. The user can put in their own crop costs and compare it with examples of grass silage, whole crop and maize silage samples.