



**Kevin Havekes, Limestone Sales Manager at Kilwaughter Lime explains how a cost and time-effective solution is changing lime practices of old and improving the bottom line.**

In recent years, the use of Granulated-Lime on fields has significantly increased; due, in no small part, to the many benefits associated with the product. From ease of application to creating immediate reaction in the soil, Granulated-Lime also helps increase the efficiency and performance of fertilisers as well as the ability to self-apply using standard fertiliser equipment.

The main benefit of Granulated-Lime however, is how it has changed the way farmers manage their soil pH, replacing the need for conventional lime, which was not without limitations.

Not only could it take between 4-6 months to react, conventional lime also required a contractor to deliver and apply the lime on fields prior to new seedings of forages and arable crops. The main disadvantage of it however, is the difficulty associated with maintaining a consistently high pH over a period of 5 or more years and the inevitability of the field becoming unproductive as the lime wore off and soil pH decreased.

In grass swards, perennial rye grass would die out and natural grasses would move in, while in arable fields, yield and quality would drop. As a result, farmers would tire of low yields and lower quality crops, eventually having little choice other than ploughing under the field and starting anew with another application of lime prior to sowing again with an arable or forage crop.

Granulated-Lime has changed the above practices for some farmers. A cost effective solution for building and then maintaining soil pH, use of Granulated-Lime has become part of many farmers' annual field work, much the same as applying fertiliser. Using soil test results to determine field pH, farmers are then able to treat each field individually according to its needs; applying a specific amount of Granulated-Lime to raise

an individual field pH to a specific target, helping them to get the most they can out of each and every field.

As Granulated-Lime is very cost effective, maintenance dressings of 50 – 100kg can be applied to the field in subsequent years to maintain pH at the targeted level, thus avoiding lower quality crops and lower yields as a result of declining pH. As soil pH is maintained at ideal levels, plants are extracting the required amount of nutrient; resulting in high yielding, high quality crops. Conveniently, because the plants are getting what they need from the soil, there is less risk of nutrient deficiency and greater opportunity for plants to persist longer, potentially extending the life of a grass sward. Further, because Granulated-Lime is so fine, it begins to work immediately when applied to the soil and nearly 100% reacts with the soil solution to have completely raised soil pH to target within 4-6 weeks when used at recommended rates. This gets the newly sown crop off to the best start and has a dramatic impact on plant populations and future yields.

The growing use of Granulated-Lime is having positive effects on farmers' bottom line. By treating each field individually according to its Granular-Lime requirement, farmers are better able to manage their soil pH, raising each field to its target and maintaining that pH. This helps to maximise fertiliser use efficiency, and results in higher yields and higher quality crops with greater persistence.

**By Kevin Havekes**

MBPR (Agric.) & FACTS Qualified Advisor FE5494



**Contact Glasson on 01524 753 600 to find out how you can use Granulated-Lime to your benefit this growing season.**