



Maize Silage

(Corn = Crop)



DM Percentage = 33%
Energy per kg DM = 10.5 MJME
Cost = 40 cents/ kgDM*

*does not include the cost of fertilisers, pesticides or the cost of cultivation and reseeding the paddock after this crop.

Feed notes

A nutritious good quality feed. Maize is a type of corn that isn't as sweet as the sweetcorn consumed by humans.

Maize has higher water requirements during summer compared to pasture. It has a higher cost due to the processing and growing requirements.

The paddock must first be ploughed or direct drilled and cannot be harvested by stock while growing as it is used for winter feed. The full plant is machine harvested and chopped into smaller pieces. The paddock must also be cultivated and replanted after harvest. It is not as stable as silage and is more prone to rot, so careful management is required to minimise oxygen exposure.

Lucerne

(Legumes = Crop)



DM Percentage = 15-25%
Energy per kg DM = 8.5-11 MJME
Cost = 8 cents /kgDM*

*does not include the cost of fertilisers, pesticides or the cost of cultivation and reseeding the paddock after this crop.

Feed notes

Lucerne needs well-draining soil so it doesn't suit some farms. It has a long tap root (up to 15m) that goes deep into the soil allowing it greater access to water and nitrogen within the soil. It also does not need as much water compared to grass. Overall providing a greater tolerance to drought compared to other feed species. However a good supply of water ensures maximum growth and feed supply.

Lucerne nutritious good quality feed but time is needed for stock to adjust to it. In spring too much Lucerne can have a detrimental effect on health so a mixed diet is recommended.

Lucerne only grows over the spring and summer and is dormant in winter. It can be grazed multiple times over the season as long as time is given for it to regrow (35 days). It can persist for up to 5 years which cuts down on the cost of labour and machinery.

Kale

(Brassica = Crop)



DM Percentage = 16%
Energy per kg DM = 12 MJME
Cost = 9 cents /kgDM *

*does not include the cost of fertilisers, pesticides or the cost of cultivation and reseeding the paddock after this crop.

Feed notes

A nutritious good quality feed. They have good tolerance to drought but it does require high soil fertility and reasonable soil moisture. Once established it has good tolerance to pests.

Because plants do not need to be fully grown cows can feed from them at any time, although there will be less feed available if grazed early.

It is break feed (feed in sections). Once consumed by cows little is left that can re-grow. Therefore paddocks need to be replanted (which costs money). Kale is often grown in winter as it can grow in low temperatures although the rate of growth is reduced.

Kales respond well to fertilisers so apply a round of fertiliser to increase the available dry matter (DM) to 8kg.

Oats

(Greenfeed Cereal = Crop)



DM Percentage = 86%
Energy per kg DM = 12 MJME
Cost = 20 cents / kgDM*

*does not include the cost of fertilisers, pesticides or the cost of cultivation and reseeding the paddock after this crop.

Feed notes

A nutritious good quality feed and a great source of fibre. This is a single crop as it can only be used once. It can be greenfeed, where it is grazed using the break feeding method. Or it can be harvested, mixed in with other plant species and stored as silage. It is important to make sure that the crop does not mature to seed heads as the energy/ quality decreases and it will not meet animal's energy needs for weight maintenance.

This is planted in the summer or autumn in the same paddock that held crops like swedes or kale. Oats are often referred to as a 'catch crop'. It is planted after crops that may have left high nitrogen levels in the soil and the oats 'catch' and use the high levels of available nitrogen for growth. This can minimise nitrogen leaching while utilising the nitrogen for plant growth and feed.

Once it is break feed of harvested there is little left that can re-grow. Therefore paddocks need to be ploughed and replanted (which costs money).