



For issue, 14 August 2012 by the Fertilizer Association of Ireland.

**New 'Nutrient Wheel' Calculator will help farmers and advisors with grassland and crop nutrient advice.**

A new 'Nutrient Calculator Wheel' has been launched by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney TD. The nutrient wheel was produced by The Fertilizer Association of Ireland, in association with Teagasc, and K+S UK & Eire Ltd.

The nutrient wheel is a field ready reckoner for estimating the phosphorus and potassium offtakes from grassland and tillage crops in Ireland. It consists of an easy-to-use wheel that shows the estimated offtake of phosphorus and potassium based on simple input values of stocking rate, concentrate feed usage and crop yield. It also includes useful field notes on soil test results and fertility levels, organic manures, lime, sulphur and magnesium.

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney, TD said that *"this is a great initiative by all parties concerned and will play an important role in ensuring that fertiliser inputs are used efficiently in a cost effective and environmentally friendly manner."* Minister Coveney also commended the Fertilizer Association of Ireland, Teagasc and K + S UK & Eire Ltd for the proactive approach they had taken in producing the nutrient wheel.

Stan Lalor, President of the Fertilizer Association of Ireland said that the Association is delighted to be leading this project to help make information more accessible and available to advisors, consultants, industry representatives and farmers. Fertilizers are an important input for agricultural production, and it is essential to use them efficiently to maximise returns and to protect the environment. The nutrient wheel will provide an easy way of calculating phosphorus and potassium requirements and will help to optimise fertilizer inputs.

Mark Plunkett, soil and crop nutrition specialist with Teagasc, said: *"the nutrient offtake calculations used in the calculator are in line with Teagasc advice. Crop yields and quality will be reduced where soil fertility is allowed to decrease to sub-optimal levels over time. Soil fertility levels have been shown to be declining in recent years from results of soil samples being analysed through Teagasc. Replacing nutrients removed in crops is essential to maintaining and managing soil fertility. This easy-to-use nutrient wheel will provide quick and simple nutrient recommendations and will be useful for anybody giving advice on nutrient inputs for grassland and crop production."*

Jerry McHoul, K+S UK & Eire Ltd., said that a similar calculator wheel for arable crops had been launched in 2011 in the UK and has proven highly popular and successful. K+S UK & Eire are delighted to see the concept adapted to grassland and made compatible with nutrient advice for Irish agriculture.

The calculator is available to advisors, consultants and industry representatives. The calculator is also available to farmers on request at participating agri-business stores around the country.



*Pictured at the launch of the Fertilizer Association of Ireland 'Nutrient Wheel' calculator were (l-r): Jerry McHoul, Technical manager K + S UK & Eire Ltd, Paddy Casey, Vice President of the Fertiliser Association of Ireland; Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney, TD; Mark Plunkett, Soil and Plant Nutrition Specialist, Teagasc; and PJ Browne, Hon. Secretary of the Fertiliser Association of Ireland.*

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Issued on behalf of The Fertilizer Association of Ireland  
14 August 2012