



Beans – A Sustainable and Profitable Break Crop Option

With increasing emphasis from the EU on sustainable protein production, beans are becoming an attractive option for Irish growers. As a nitrogen-fixing crop, beans not only meet their own nitrogen requirements but also leave valuable residual nitrogen for the following crop, reducing overall fertiliser demand and improving rotation performance.

Financial Incentive

Under current EU policy, beans qualify for a support payment ranging from €350–€500 per hectare, guaranteed regardless of yield. This makes beans an appealing low-risk addition to the tillage rotation.

Soil & Sowing Guidelines

Beans are best suited to heavier soil types, but they can also perform well on lighter soils when sown early.

- **Spring sowing window:** Mid-February to March
- **Earlier sowing is strongly recommended** to maximise yield potential

Target Plant Population

- 25–30 plants/m² under normal conditions
- Increase to 40 plants/m² for late sowing or on less productive soils

Recommended Varieties

The main varieties currently available are:

- **Lynx** – good yielding, moderately early maturing variety. An average yield index of 100. Good protein content. Good resistance to brackling and very good lodging resistance. Moderate resistance to chocolate spot and downy mildew. Lynx is also moderately resistant to rust.
- **Protina** – good yielding, moderately early maturing variety. High protein content. Good resistance to brackling and lodging. Moderate resistance to chocolate spot and downy mildew.

Soil Fertility Requirements

While beans fix their own nitrogen and do not require additional N fertiliser, maintaining correct soil fertility is essential:

- Optimum soil pH: 6.8 (Don't forget lime where required)
- Phosphorus (Index 3 soil): 20 kg/ha
- Potash (Index 3 soil): 40 kg/ha
- Higher application rates are necessary for Index 1 and 2 soils.

Weed Control

Effective weed control is critical. A strong pre-emergence residual herbicide programme is essential, as **Basagran** is currently the only approved post-emergence option for broad-leaved weeds and its effectiveness is limited.

Main pre-emergence options include:

- **Nirvana**
- **Nirvana + Defy**
- **Stallion**

Disease Control

A typical fungicide programme consists of two applications:

1. At flower initiation
2. Approximately four weeks later

Harvest

Harvest generally takes place from late August through September and into October, depending on the meteorological conditions of the year. Overall, beans are considered a relatively safe crop to grow and harvest, offering both agronomic and financial benefits.



Benefits of Certified Seed

1. Genetic Purity and Varietal Identity

Certified seed is produced under strict controls to ensure genetic purity and trueness to variety. This guarantees that the crop grown reflects the performance characteristics of the variety as assessed in Irish Recommended Lists.

2. Improved Establishment and Crop Uniformity

Certified seed must meet minimum standards for germination percentage, thousand grain weight consistency and physical purity. In comparison to farm saved seed, these standards ensure the farmer is purchasing a product with guaranteed germination standards in suitable conditions.

3. Reduced Risk from Seed-Borne Diseases

Seed-borne and seed-transmitted diseases remain a significant risk in Irish cereal production, particularly under cool, damp establishment conditions. Certified seed is tested and inspected to minimise the presence of diseases such as loose smuts, bunts and ergotism.

4. Weed Control and Biosecurity

Certified seed is processed to strict standards that limit contamination by weed seeds, including regulated and problematic species such as wild oats, sterile brome, canary grass and blackgrass. Preventing the introduction of weeds through seed is particularly important given increasing herbicide resistance, reduced availability of active ingredients and higher costs of post-emer-

gence weed control. Seed crops are monitored independently by the Department of Agriculture to ensure weed seeds do not end up in certified seed.

5. Access to Modern Varieties Adapted to Irish Conditions

Certified seed provides access to the latest varieties developed through European plant breeding programmes. Irish seed distributors and the Department of Agriculture screen potential suitable candidate varieties under Irish conditions before they progress to farm level. This ensures we are growing varieties suitable for the Irish climate and that have the ability to produce yields which meet our expectations. Investing in certified seed supports the industry which makes the importation, multiplication and supply of modern suitable crop varieties possible.

6. Seed Treatment Quality and Accuracy

Certified seed is commonly supplied with professionally applied seed treatments, ensuring accurate application rates, uniform coverage and reduced handling risks. This improves early pest and disease protection and supports strong seed establishment.

7. Economic Considerations

While certified seed carries a higher upfront cost than farm-saved seed, it is important to note that this cost is frequently offset by improvement of yield from improved genetics, lower seed rates, reduced weed control costs, and lower risk of germination issues.

P & K requirements for oilseed rape yielding 5 t/ha

Soil index	P kg/ha (units/ac)	K kg/ha (units/ac)
1	55 (44)	105 (84)
2	45 (36)	90 (72)
3	35 (28)	75 (60)
4	0	0



Making the most of March Grass

As we move into March and calving numbers increase, the workload in the yard rises quickly. While February was dominated by talk of weather and slurry storage, most farmers are now eager to get cows out grazing. There's a lot of ground to catch up on to get grazing properly underway in 2026.



Grazing progress will vary from farm to farm, so focus on your own situation and the conditions in front of you. Many farms may not hit the target of 33% grazed by 20th March. If that's the case, take every suitable opportunity to catch up once ground conditions allow.

Slurry should be out by now on most farms. If it's not, make it a priority — especially on silage ground — to ensure enough P and K is in place for first cut. At the next available opportunity, chemical fertiliser should be put out in order to drive grass growth following a slow spring.

Most farms will spread protected urea (46% N or 38% N + 7% S), typically around 24 units/ac across the farm. If you are late getting fertiliser out, you may need to increase the rate to 30 units/ac to catch up and aim to have 60–70 units/ac applied by April.

Ground conditions are more important than cover in many cases when deciding which paddocks to graze. That said; try to balance both where possible. Early grazed grass has real value — at a recent Teagasc walk in Wicklow, it was valued at €4.17 per cow per day.

Avoiding poaching is critical. This will depend on soil type and how well your ground holds water. Use backing fences, spur roadways and multiple access points to reduce damage.

Grass dry matter across many Leinster farms is around 15% at the moment, with the feed value of the grass likely to only be fair. Energy intake is crucial in the coming weeks as cows approach peak milk. Well-fed cows will hold body condition better, produce more milk, and stay milking longer into the year

Fully housed – grass silage + pellets	<i>Elite 19% dairy pellets</i>
Fully housed – maize silage/ beet + grass silage + pellets	<i>Supreme 25% Dairy pellets – need protein to balance low protein feeds</i>
Grass <6hours/day + grass silage	<i>Supreme 16% dairy Pellets</i>
Grass >8hours/day + grass silage	<i>Supreme 16% or Spring Breeder Pellets</i>
Full time grazing + pellets	<i>Supreme Spring Breeder or Super 14% Dairy Pe</i>
Full time grazing 2nd rotation	<i>Elite Cream Dairy Pellets – combats lush grass</i>

Quinns Supreme Spring Breeder: - 14% Crude Protein and high energy (0.97 UFL)

- 40% Irish cereals and pulses included in the pellet
- All top quality ingredients
- No fillers included
- Includes Rumi Pro Mineral Package which contains protected Copper, Zinc and Selenium for fertility and herd health
- Feeding rate: 4kg per cow/day



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- 1936** – Quinns of Baltinglass Ltd. began trading on Main Street, laying the foundations of what would become a thriving family business
- 1959** – Acquisition of the West Wicklow Hotel, renamed Quinns Corner Bar
- 1961** – Opening of the grain yard on Mill Street
- 1962** – Purchase of neighbouring O’Neills Bar, further strengthening Quinns presence at the heart of the local community



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Michael Fitzsimons – Kildare

Key Components in Formulation:

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- Soya bean meal & Rapeseed Meal
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- Yea-Sac
- Selplex
- Bioplex Copper and Zinc
- Digestible Fibre

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Maximising Irish Grain

ENRICHED WITH ALGIMUN TO:

- Support optimal gut health
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- Help reduce the risk of infection at critical early stages

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