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FERTILISER – IS IT VALUE FOR MONEY?

We live in a “market driven economy”. This means that retailers (fertiliser companies) are constantly clamouring for the consumers (farmers) attention, hoping you buy their product. How do you decide which to buy? Are they all value for money?

Consumers, like fertiliser products, also vary:

1. Some are impulsive: they buy without giving much thought to what they are doing - not an issue if you have “deep pockets” and are untroubled as to whether a particular fertiliser is value for money or otherwise.
2. Some are more considered but don’t really think about what they are doing too much, preferring instead to take the advice of either the retailers agent or an agent/consultant they have become familiar with or have a rapport with.
3. Others think about their purchase solely in terms of getting a “bargain” - which usually means getting the fertiliser for the lowest price/unit weight.
4. Still others think about their purchase not just in terms of the cost of the product but also with regard to the benefit they anticipate receiving from it.

Which of the above categories best describes you?

Many farmers fit within categories 1-3! They either don’t think too much about their fertiliser purchase, or they buy the same product year after year, applying it at the same rate, whether it is required or not! Others are fixated on the unit cost and then often of just one nutrient: phosphorus. Such approaches do not guarantee you will get value for money from your fertiliser purchase.

Value for money purchases involve thinking about what you are buying! What is the current soil/plant nutrient status? (not just phosphorus and/or pH). What nutrient inputs are actually needed? What kind of benefits will arise - increased dry matter production and quality, better pasture utilisation, improved stock health, less veterinary costs etc. Fertiliser is a “big ticket” item. You owe it to yourself to think seriously about the purchase you are contemplating.

When the fertiliser rep calls this season, what type of consumer will you be? Will you get value for money? It’s your choice! It’s also your cheque!!