

Dairy farmers verdict on Tried and Tested

Name: **Andrew Potter**

Region: **Farndale, near York**

Farm: **Dairy**

Size: **114 hectares in new NVZ's**



Background

Low Bragg Farm is located in Farndale, Kirkbymoorside, near York. It is a grassland farm with 114 hectares in new NVZ's. The main enterprise on the farm is the dairy herd. Currently they have eighty cows and produce all their own forage.

Have you completed a nutrient management plan before?

This is the first nutrient management plan I have completed as in the past we have never kept records of applications, the only thing we have done is send soil samples away for analysis. However, now we are farming in an NVZ we need to compile a nutrient management plan and Tried and Tested was recommended by our FWAG advisor.

What were your first impressions of Tried and Tested?

When I first got the plan I was less interested in reading the sections about seasons, my main focus was completing the farm and field record sheets. If you use Tried and Tested on a regular basis the sections on the seasons act to prompt you with regards to what you should be doing at certain times of the time. The farm and field record sheets included in the Plan are very easy to fill in once you have obtained your information. You have to use the Defra Fertiliser Manual (RB209) and the series of Guidance for Farmers in Nitrate Vulnerable Zones leaflets alongside the plan which is slightly challenging.

What are the benefits?

Some of the benefits of using Tried and Tested include the practical aspect of having to calculate what and how much fertiliser to apply to fields. In the past when a soil sample needed analysing we were given directions by an advisor who calculated application rates. Using Tried and Tested means that I can now do that myself and manage fertiliser applications more efficiently. I will definitely be buying more nitrogen in the future and less compound which will undoubtedly come with associated cost savings. In terms of environmental benefits it was interesting to read in the winter section that nutrients in manufactured feeds could be a large proportion of the farm's total input. If this is in manure we could end up with excessive amounts of phosphate which I will be looking into.

