Soil fertility
Winter crops

Sow

Fodder beet requires certain nutrient levels to yield well.

Soil test paddock(s) 6-12 months to a depth of 150 mm before planting. This allows time for pH or nutrient issues to be addressed. Apply and incorporate all base fertiliser before planting.

pH

The ideal soil pH is 6.0-6.3. It can take 6 months or more for lime to act (depending on incorporation, weather, and the type of lime used), so apply this as early as possible. As a rule of thumb, 1 t/ha lime raises the pH by 0.1.

Phosphorus

Phosphorus is essential for plant establishment and overall yield. Target Olsen P level for fodder beet is 15+. Typically crops benefit from a base dressing of 25-50 kg P/ha.

Nitrogen

Before cultivation, soil test to 150 mm deep for anaerobically mineralisable nitrogen (AMN). As a guide:

- If AMN >80 ug/g, 50 kg N/ha is required.
- If AMN <80 ug/g, up to 100 kg N/ha may be required.

Research has shown there is no yield advantage to applying more than 100 kg N/ha. Timing is important - apply 50% at sowing and 50% before canopy closure.

Potassium

Fodder beet requires soil potassium quick test levels

of 5+. As a rule of thumb, if the soil test result is lower than 3, apply 100 kg K/ha. If it is 3-5, apply 50 kg K/ha.

Sulphur

If the sulphur quick test result is below 5, apply at sowing.

Magnesium

Recommended quick test soil levels for fodder beet are 8+. If magnesium is required apply 25-30 kg Mg/ha as a base fertiliser.

Sodium

If quick test soil values are less than 5, apply 150 kg NaCl/ha as a base fertiliser.

Boron

Boron is essential for root crop development. If soil test results are less than 1 parts per million (ppm), include 1.5 kg B/ha in the starter fertiliser, e.g. granular boron (15% B) at a rate of 10 kg/ha.

Correct soil fertility results in healthy, high yielding crops.