

## Lucerne

Lucerne - A crop with a Future

### Foreword

Studies have shown that the inclusion of Lucerne silage in dairy cow diets can improve forage intake, and increase output of milk protein, with no change in milk fat. The benefits together with lower forage production costs when compared with grass silage should help to improve margin/litre of milk produced. Yet in spite of all of these important attributes, ruminant livestock producers have been reluctant to grow Lucerne silage and the area in the UK is at present small. The reasons are that in general forage legumes are perceived as crops that are currently difficult to grow and hard to conserve. This situation is changing with the availability of suitable disease resistant varieties, the arrival of new equipment designed specifically for rapid wilting and access to big balers, the use of appropriate additives for effective fermentation and the production of advisory leaflets such as this one from Cotswold Seeds.

All these factors have helped to renew interest in forage legumes and will increase the knowledge and experience of a crop with a future.

- By Dr Richard Phipps, CEDAR