Digestate Information Sheets No.3 – Application methods

Digestate is available in 3 main forms whole liquid Digestate, separated liquid Digestate and separated solid Digestate and can be applied to land by various methods.

**LIQUID DIGESTATE**

Liquid digestate can be applied by tanker or by umbilical systems.

Tankers are simple self-contained equipment while umbilical systems more complex and are usually used by contractors.

Tankers are heavier than umbilical systems which have a greater risk causing soil compaction when the soil is saturated.

Both application systems for liquid Digestate can have different methods for spreading the material.

1. **Splash plate**
   a. Benefits - simple system, cheapest option, lowest cost of application.
   b. Drawbacks – least accurate in applying material, highest for losses of nitrogen to atmosphere.

2. **Dribble Bar**
   b. Drawbacks – More expensive than splash plate, heavier than splash plate, more prone to blockages than splash plate (more suited to separated liquid.

3. **Trailing Shoe**
   a. Benefits – more efficient than dribble bar, less losses of nitrogen than dribble bar.
   b. Drawbacks – More expensive than Dribble bar, heavier than dribble bar, needs larger tractor than Dribble bar.

4. **Shallow injection**
   a. Benefits – most efficient method of Digestate application, least losses of nitrogen,
   b. Drawbacks – Heaviest and most expensive system and requires largest tractor to pull equipment.

**SOLID DIGESTATE**

Solid Digestate can be spread using equipment similar to those used to spread solid farmyard manure (FYM) the most accurate of these being rear discharge types which have a more accurate spread pattern.

Solid Digestate can have a high Readily Available Nitrogen (RAN) content which makes it advisable to incorporate this into the soil as quickly as possible ideally within 24 hours.