

# Technical Update - Reseeding

Information correct as at 09:00am on 02.07.2021

- Most farms now have good forage stocks for the year, which could provide an opportunity to take land out of production later in the season for a grassland upgrade
- Select the fields that are the least productive
- Ensure that any issues with pH, nutrient status drainage or compaction are dealt with
- Use the right mixture for the situation and varieties that are on the NIAB (or equivalent) list

Taking advantage of good forage stocks, as we have on many farms this season, to take ground out of production for a reseed will pay dividends in the longer-term. By now it should be possible to determine which fields are the least productive on the farm and to target these for improvement.

Grass breeding moves on significantly each year (you would not use a semen straw from a bull that was 20 years old and expect the best results) and even under excellent management swards will deteriorate over time. Ideally perennial swards should be reseeded or rejuvenated every 5-6 year so aim to reseed 15-20% of the area each year so you do not end up with all swards needing attention at the same time.

Before embarking on a reseed it is worth considering whether the current sward can be “rescued” by appropriate management. For this to be achieved there needs to be a minimum of 60% ryegrass present. If this is not the case, then a reseed will be necessary.

## Why Reseed?

- Improve pasture yield and quality
- Introduce improved grass genetics with improved productivity, durability and disease resistance
- Reduce weed burdens
- Increase pasture response to fertiliser by using more nitrogen-efficient varieties
- Address soil compaction problems
- Introduce clover into the sward

Reseeding is expensive so it is important to determine why the previous sward has fallen behind and to rectify those problems to give the new ley the best chance of a long and productive life.

## Causes of Sward Deterioration

- Poor initial establishment
- Poor drainage and soil structure
- Incorrect soil pH and low nutrient status- target pH of at least 6.2 for grass and apply fertiliser/manure to bring indices up towards optimum levels
- Poor management by under or overstocking allowing non sown species to flourish at the expense of the mixture

## Weeds

Cleaning up mature weeds is best done before ploughing using glyphosate, which will kill everything that is growing. For best results cut sward and allow to regrow for around 3 weeks. Weeds are best controlled if they are sprayed whilst actively growing and before flowering. In the new sward seedling weeds are much easier to control and the new ley should be monitored and sprayed if necessary.

## Pests and Diseases

Seedlings can be attacked by slugs, leatherjackets, nematodes, wireworm and Frit fly, the latter being the most serious as the life cycle coincides with the seedlings emerging in the autumn. It is a particular problem in grass to grass reseeds as they can be carried over from the previous sward.

As no chemical control is now available a firm seedbed and quickly established crop will help and a break crop such as stubble turnips or kale will reduce pest burdens. If this is not feasible then the longer the break between destruction of the previous sward and establishment of the new one the better. Slug pellets should be applied if there is a lot of trash present or if the seedbed is not firm enough (a bigger problem if the grass is established using minimal cultivations).

## Seed Rates and Mixtures:

Select a seed mixture appropriate for the site and intended use of the ley. Use varieties on the recommended grass and clover lists, selecting a mixture of diploids and tetraploids from either the same or adjacent heading groups, keeping heading dates reasonably close.

Target seed rates of 34.5 kg/ha for ryegrasses and if using clover in the mix sow at least 3.5kg/ha.

Latest sowing dates will vary across the country but in most cases, reseeding should be complete by early /mid-September or late August if clover content is significant.

Advance Sourcing have a range of mixtures for different situations and requirements. Speak to your consultant for more information on the appropriate mix and full recommendations for a successful reseed.

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For further discussion or to help with any questions that you may have, please contact Consultant Support on [consultantsupport@kiteconsulting.com](mailto:consultantsupport@kiteconsulting.com) or 01902 851007 / 07542 403225