

# Technical Update - Grass Reseeding

Information correct as at 09:00am on 14.07.2023

- Forage productivity is crucial under current market conditions
- New leys will give much better responses to expensive fertiliser
- Payback can be seen in as little as 1 year
- Look at options for legumes to reduce reliance on artificial N
- Identify poorest performing grass leys on the farm
- Identify reasons for potential poor sward performance and correct before reseeding
- Use varieties from the NIAB list (or regional equivalent)

## Why Reseed?

There have always been good reasons to adopt a regular reseeding policy, but with increased fertiliser costs the extra potential of new leys is even more significant. The dry conditions experienced since mid-May could also have impacted sward productivity going forward and it may be necessary to replace or rejuvenate leys.

Upgrading a sward gives the following advantages and opportunities:

- Improves pasture yield and quality
- Allows the introduction of modern grass genetics with improved productivity, quality, durability and disease resistance.
- Increases response to fertiliser by using more nitrogen-efficient varieties.
- Reduces weed burden
- Can help to address any soil compaction problems
- Gives an opportunity to introduce clover into the sward

## Causes of Sward Deterioration:

Before embarking on the investment of a reseed it is always worth identifying why the current sward is not performing. If these underlying problems are not rectified the benefits will be reduced

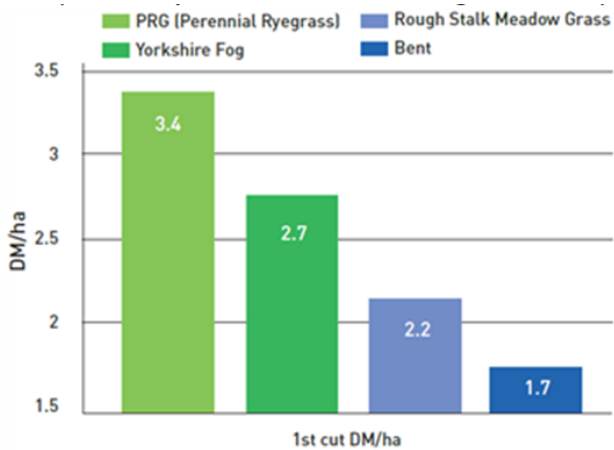
- Poor drainage and soil structure
- Incorrect soil pH and low nutrient status
- Poor management by understocking and overstocking allowing non sown species to flourish at the expense of the desired mixture

## Reseeding – is it worth it?

- A full reseed will cost £160 - £180/acre (£32 - £36 per year over 5 years)
- You will see a 30% boost in yield year 1 then 10% per year after that (compared to a 5-year- old ley)
- For example, 5.2t DM/acre compared to 4t DM/acre
- If grass silage costs £140/t DM then reseeding cost is recouped in a little over one year from extra yield alone

## Yield of PRG vs Weed grasses:

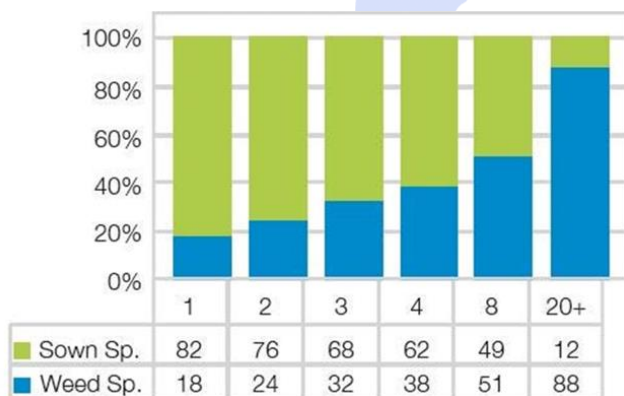
The table below shows the higher fertiliser response rates for Ryegrass compared to some weed grasses.



Source: Grassland Research Institute

## Weed Ingression

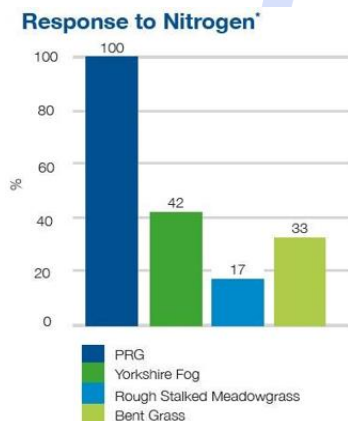
- Even in well managed swards proportion of sown species deteriorates over time
- After 5 years could make up 40% of the sward



Source: Grassland Research Institute

## Ryegrass vs. weed grasses

- Ryegrasses show significantly higher response to increased N applications



\*These losses in response occur when N is increased from 50-150 units/ac

Source: Grassland Research Institute

## Pre-seeding checklist:

Test soil for nutrient status and pH. Lime is the cheapest input available to help with grassland management, but is often overlooked. Target pH should be 6.5 as below 6 nutrient uptake is seriously reduced. As well as increasing the productivity of the new ley, lime will help reduce the effect of acidity as the old sward decomposes. Add N, P & K to the seedbed depending on soil indices.

Finally check for compaction by digging a hole to see if there is an issue and how deep the problem lies. Shallow compaction can be taken out with the cultivations, deeper problems may need a sub-soiler.

Current swards can be improved by oversowing and it is possible to reduce the cost of a reseed by direct drilling. However, now that we have no chemicals for controlling grassland pests these techniques come with a higher risk of crop failure.

## Which Grass Seed?

- Always use varieties on the NIAB list which have been proven for their yield, quality and disease resistance characteristics
- Choose a mixture that is suitable for the farm's specific conditions and the required end use
- Perennial ryegrasses will provide a quality product throughout the season, giving greater yields of energy and protein
- Consider using clover in mixes to reduce N requirements and add protein to forages
- If grassland weeds are under control, then consider introducing clover into existing swards
- All Advance grass seed mixes have been specially selected for a specific role and from 2022 all have the option of clover inclusion, with the varieties chosen for their compatibility with the rest of the sward.

## Attention to detail:

Reseeding is expensive so it is worth doing well to get the best results.

- Tackle weeds in the old sward with glyphosate applied at the correct growth stage for a clean start.
- Ensure a fine, firm seedbed to promote good seed to soil contact.
- Control weeds at an early stage
- If there is a big population of leather jackets, frit fly or wireworms consider using a break crop to disrupt the life cycle of the pests before re-establishing grass

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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

