



Michael Norriss - Programme Leader Grasses, Kimihia Research Centre

“As Programme Leader Grasses, a major part of my role is to breed new cultivars with improved nutritional characteristics. These cultivars must not only produce improved feed value, they must also demonstrate increased animal productivity and profitability. While dry matter production is an important part of the productivity equation, nutritional characteristics such as digestibility (Metabolisable Energy), palatability, rate of intake, rate of digestion, fibre content, endophyte, and clover compatibility, are equally important in determining the success of a new cultivar. Our ultimate aim is to breed grasses that not only last the distance, but also maximise rumen efficiency with the correct quality and quantity of feed, as an efficient rumen will drive maximum animal production.”

ANIMAL FRIENDLY™ CERTIFICATION

History

PGG Wrightson Seeds pioneered the technique of using animal productivity as a superior measure of pasture performance, compared with the traditional technique of measuring dry matter production. Using the animal production potential of a pasture to measure its worth is now well recognised among researchers, farmers and most seed companies, who acknowledge that what the animal produces from a pasture is the best measure of pasture performance.

PGG Wrightson Seeds named this pasture development philosophy **ANIMAL FRIENDLY™**, and it has been a part of our approach since the late 1980's.

Initially the **ANIMAL FRIENDLY™** approach was confined to PGG Wrightson Seeds plant breeding programmes, where plant selection criteria was broadened from dry matter production, persistence, and disease resistance, to include a range of forage quality attributes such as:

- Animal preference
- Pasture digestibility (Metabolisable Energy)
- Endophyte toxicity
- Clover content (this is influenced by the grass cultivar, and affects intake, forage quality and nitrogen-fixation)
- Rate of intake (how quickly the pasture can be eaten)
- Rate of digestion (how quickly the pasture passes through the rumen)
- Seed head production (too much can cause reduced intake and reduced animal performance)
- Proportion of green leaf to dead leaf

Once new cultivars had been developed using the **ANIMAL FRIENDLY™** approach, scientifically-run animal trials proved the advantages of the PGG Wrightson Seeds' perennial ryegrass cultivars Aries HD and Quartet. With the release of Aries HD and Quartet onto the market, the concept of **ANIMAL FRIENDLY™** continued to evolve. A part of this evolution included development of **ANIMAL FRIENDLY™** certification, a brand that is applied to certain elite PGG Wrightson Seeds products that achieve or exceed the required animal performance standards.

What does **ANIMAL FRIENDLY™** Certification mean?

ANIMAL FRIENDLY™ certification is a brand designed to give farmers confidence that the forage product they purchase will not only yield and persist as expected, but will demonstrate the forage quality necessary for maximum animal performance. PGG Wrightson Seeds cultivars that have achieved **ANIMAL FRIENDLY™** certification must demonstrate the following attribute(s):

Forages with yield and persistence, that have produced improved animal performance in a scientific trial(s) and/or have shown improved physical attribute(s) linked to animal performance.

Look for the **ANIMAL FRIENDLY™ mark applied exclusively to PGG Wrightson Seeds' cultivars.**

