

Opportunities for undersowing

TECHNICAL UPDATE

Challenging summers with various combinations of moisture stress, insect pressure and overgrazing will mean some paddocks will require undersowing or 'stitching up' this autumn. To identify and prioritise which ones, we recommend walking all your paddocks to be able to properly assess plant density, insect damage, weed presence and to allow implementation of an undersowing strategy.

USE THIS PASTURE CONDITION SCORE TOOL TO HELP WITH DECISIONS

Run out paddocks scoring either a 1-3 will be those you target for undersowing.

- 5** Paddock covered in dense swards of desired grasses and clovers
No action required. Would be happy if the whole farm was in this state
- 4** Patches of low level damage, some weeds, less vigorous grasses
Check fertility. Apply autumn nitrogen to encourage tillering.
Paddock probably OK for the coming season
- 3** Large sections of low level damage, weeds, less vigorous grasses
Apply autumn nitrogen. Undersow in the autumn with perennial ryegrass (longer term solution) containing appropriate endophyte.
Perennial ryegrass options include Platform or Excess
- 2** Severe damage in parts, many weeds, patches of bare ground
Either:
- Sow in perennial ryegrass in autumn, or:
- Undersow with Italian ryegrass (e.g. Lush AR37) in autumn and plan to renew in following 12-18 months
- 1** Severe damage across entire paddock
Sow into an annual ryegrass (e.g. Winter Star II) and summer crop in spring. Plan to sow in perennial pasture in the following autumn

Once you've pasture condition scored the farm, you'll be able to prioritise which paddocks require undersowing.



NOW, TO CHOOSE WHICH PASTURE YOU NEED DEPENDS ON HOW LONG YOU NEED IT TO LAST.

Here are our recommendations:



For a 6-9 month option for paddocks destined for cropping or renewal in spring. Condition score 1 paddocks should be sprayed out and sown into a full rate of Winter Star II.

Sowing Rate: 18+ kg/ha (full rate 28-30 kg/ha).



For an 18-24 month option that can provide a high quality, short term fix before you plan to fully renovate the pasture.

Sowing Rate: 15+ kg/ha (full rate 28-30 kg/ha).



For 24+ months; great for productive dairy and sheep and beef farms; especially tiller dense; great ability to fill in drill rows fast.

Sowing Rate: 12+ kg/ha (full rate 18-21 kg/ha).



For 24+ months; great for productive dairy and sheep and beef farms; great option for lighter soil types.

Sowing Rate: 12+ kg/ha (full rate 18-21 kg/ha).

#Platform has been bred, selected and successfully tested as a perennial and will function as a perennial ryegrass. Due to a small number of tip awns, Platform is certified as Lolium boucheanum.

In late summer/early autumn while soil temperatures are still high, perennial ryegrass is a good option for undersowing. As the days shorten and soil temperatures drop below 12 degrees, we should switch to Italian (e.g. Lush AR37) and annual ryegrasses (e.g. Winter Star II) as they are much faster to establish and have better cool season activity.

Early undersowing allows seedling establishment to occur in more favorable conditions which in turn maximises establishment, tillering and early dry matter production. In comparison, later undersowing may result in missing out on favourable growing conditions and the opportunity to produce valuable winter feed, while increasing the risk of invasive grasses and weeds establishing.

Tips & tricks

TIMING

Aim to undersow paddocks before bare areas are filled in with unproductive grass and broadleaf weeds. Ideally paddocks should be hard grazed to minimise competition during the establishment phase.

EARLY GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Graze undersown paddocks when seedlings pass the 'pull test'. Avoid accumulating large covers as this will shade out recently sown seedlings and reduce tillering.

ENDOPHYTE

Using a novel endophyte is important when undersowing run out pastures, particularly in pasture with an existing pest issue such as Argentine Stem Weevil and Black Beetle.

SEED TREATMENT

All seed that is undersown should be treated with Superstrike® to protect against pasture pests. This is a cheap insurance, and a small cost when considering the cost of re-drilling the paddock 6-8 weeks later.

NOTE - Pastures undersown with Superstrike seed have a grazing withholding period of 21 days.

For more information talk to your local seed retailer, freephone 0800 805 505 or visit pggwrightsonseeds.com

 PGG Wrightson Seeds