



Priorities

- The optimum amount of white clover in a field across the season is 20-25% of total herbage mass



Opportunities to save money

- At this level, white clover can fix up to 150 kg N/ha per year improving both animal and sward production, as well as allowing a reduction in chemical N fertiliser use
- Adjust fertiliser application rate in summer – where sward white clover content is increasing (>20%), reduce chemical N fertiliser application rates to approx. 9 kg N/ha per rotation

Key steps

- In spring, good grazing management is crucial to promote white clover production and persistence
- In spring, avoid poaching using on/off grazing
- Good soil fertility promotes sward white clover content – white clover requires a minimum soil Index 3 for P (5.1 – 8 mg/l) and K (101 – 150 mg/l) and a minimum soil pH of 6.5-7.0
- Reseed and oversow areas of the farm with low or no white clover in April and May

Building white clover content in grazing swards



Establishing white clover on farm will take a number of years using a combination of reseed and over-sowing. Use Irish Recommended List grass and white clover varieties

Incorporating white clover in a full reseed is the most reliable method of establishing white clover and provides the best opportunity for weed control, whereas over-sowing is a simple and low cost method of introducing white clover into existing swards

- Aim to complete a full reseed of 10-15% of the grazing area as early in the year as possible (April, May)



Prepare a fine, firm seedbed



Seed mix should include 3.5 to 5.0 kg/ha medium leaf size clover for cattle swards and 5.0 to 6.0 kg/ha small leaf size clover for sheep swards



Roll well to ensure good seed and soil contact

- Over-sow 10% of the available area in April or May immediately after grazing (≤ 4 cm post-grazing sward height) or after cutting the paddock for surplus bales



Sowing rate should be 4.0 to 6.0 kg/ha of white clover seed

- Post-sowing management – full reseed or over-sowing



Target a pre-grazing yield of 600 to 1000 kg DM/ha and a post grazing height sward of ≤ 4 cm for at least the first three grazings post-sowing



Graze later in the autumn to avoid carrying heavy covers over the first winter period