

Teagasc Notes for week ending Friday 13th August 2021

Reseeding Grassland

Reseeding grassland will increase both the quantity and quality of grass grown. Estimates vary but new reseeds should grow in the region of 20- 40% more grass compared to swards with less perennial ryegrass. Importantly, a lot of this extra growth will occur in the Spring and Autumn. Increased animal performance, improved responsiveness to Nitrogen and a great opportunity to tackle weeds are all important additional benefits. However costing roughly €300/acre, it represents a significant investment. Thus the importance of a successful reseed is vital.

Timing:

Spring reseeding is becoming ever more popular with farmers and is generally the preference. A Spring reseed offers great opportunities for ideal post seeding management such as grazing of the sward and post establishment spraying. This can also be achieved in the Autumn, but generally the earlier the seeds are sown the better at this time of year before ground conditions deteriorate.

The Pasture Profit Index (PPI)

Firstly identify the poorest performing paddocks for reseeding on you farm. The next major decision is selecting the most appropriate grass varieties. The first thing to consider is the primary target use of the field. Is it predominantly grazing or is it generally used as a silage paddock?

The Pasture Profit Index tool allows farmers to select the varieties which best meet the needs of the paddock they're reseeding. It is a table ranking the top varieties based on their profit potential for the following key traits;

- Seasonal DM Yield
- Quality
- Silage Making
- Persistency in Sward

For farms in derogation there is a requirement to include clover in the reseeding mix at a rate of 0.6kg/acre for naked seed or 1kg/acre for pelleted clover seed.

Spraying:

Spraying off the old sward is essential, a general glyphosate product can be used for this. But particularly where large tap root weeds (such as docks) are present it is very important to allow enough time for the product to work its way down into the roots of the plant. Check the product label for application rates and also to determine the time interval between spraying and grazing or cutting.

Fine and Firm Seedbed:

Ploughing or using minimum tillage (i.e. discing, power harrowing, stitching) can all give excellent establishment results. The decision will come down to preference as well as other factors but the main objective for all methods is to achieve a fine, firm seedbed. Roll fields after sowing to ensure good soil to

seed contact and to help preserve moisture in the soil. After rolling the seedbed should be firm enough that you could cycle a bicycle across it, otherwise it may need further rolling.

Soil Fertility:

Carrying out a soil test before reseeding will help to identify other possible reasons why a particular paddock is under performing, while also indicating the nutrient requirements for the new reseed. Ensuring adequate Phosphorus (P), Potassium (K) and Lime are essential for successful reseeding as well as for the persistence of the new sward into the future.

If min-till methods as mentioned above are being used, lime will need to be applied at a rate of 2t/ac, to counteract the acid that will be produced as the old sward decays.

As a general rule of thumb, 3 bags of 10:10:20 per acre are required for establishing the new seedlings but this will depend on the soil test results and also a farm's individual Phosphorus allowances.

Post Spraying:

The best time for the control of docks is when they are at the seedling stage in a new reseed. Chickweed can also sometimes be a problem where it is very vigorous and begins to out compete the grass plants. 5-6 weeks after sowing is generally the best time to apply the post emergence spray, using a clover friendly product if clover was included in the mix.

Reseeding is an expensive investment which can deliver excellent returns. However for the investment to succeed attention to detail and giving the young delicate grass plant every chance to establish is vital.