

# Selecting a regrassing method



## Introduction

Regrassing is generally done to improve the production and quality levels of a pasture. This will not be achieved if the reason for the poor production is something other than the current pasture species. Poor soil fertility or a drainage problem as examples could be the cause of the poor performance and therefore renovating the pasture would be futile. Choosing the most appropriate method for regrassing is a matter of weighing up what you are trying to achieve, what problems you are trying to overcome and what options you have.

## Basic options for Pasture renewal

Regrassing methods fall into two basic categories; grass to grass or break crop. Both have benefits and it is a matter of which best suits your situation.

One basic method of pasture renewal is to replace a pasture with a crop, typically a brassica or maize crop and then when that crop is harvested, resowing the paddock into pasture. The paddock is generally sprayed with a herbicide and cultivated before and after the crop. This is the principal benefit of this method; the 'double spray' and two cultivations provide an excellent opportunity to kill many weeds and pests. If done well, this should provide an excellent seedbed for pasture establishment.

Grass to grass is quite simply replacing one pasture with another through spraying out the pasture and direct drilling in another, or cultivating the paddock and then sowing. With grass to grass, the paddock is generally not out of pasture production as long and the cost of a second cultivation and seedbed preparation and spray is potentially avoided. This is obviously true if the new pasture is direct drilled. Another option is to spray the paddock with a herbicide and then leave the paddock for a period to allow weed seeds that may exist to germinate, spray these out and then sow the new pasture. This process can be accelerated by spraying just once if there is no problem with persistent weeds or by spraying the paddock out, and after a reduced period of time, sowing it and then applying the second spray prior to emergence. This requires careful management in terms of residuals effects of chemicals and emergence times.

This done properly is a perfectly fine means of establishing a new pasture. Using appropriate pest protection such as seed treatment and slug bait is highly recommended in this situation. Slugs can be a particular problem with direct drilling pastures and a putting some slug bait 'down the drill' and broadcasting the rest is generally the recommended method of providing protection. In cases of heavy soil/more distinct drill lines, drilling all bait is the recommended means and visa versa.

## Management Issues

The critical requirement in successful pasture renewal is planning. Pasture renewal is a major although potentially very profitable undertaking and should be planned carefully to ensure success. Prior to regrassing determining what if any problems exist such as soil fertility, weeds, pests, or drainage problem and addressing these before attempting to establish a new pasture is vital. Once these problems have been remedied, selecting appropriate pasture species and managing their establishment is the next step.

## Conclusion

There are many reasons for regrassing, many different methods and many benefits to doing so. There are a vast range of options in terms of the new pasture to be sown. It is a matter of determining what is the goal, what constraints may exist and finding the best solution for any particular situation.

For more information contact Cropmark Seeds Ltd  
Ph: 0800 427 676