



Early Season Cutting

New Grass Trials Generating Interesting Data

Independent testing of our grass mixtures is key to producing better performing forage. The latest trials were established at Harper Adams in autumn 2013. They are already generating useful information. **Hurricane III** out-yielded the Italian control, Gemini, by 21% at first cut or 3t/Ha of 25% silage. The **Hurricane III** dry matter has been about 3% higher than the control, potentially allowing for faster wilting or creating higher intake silage. There will be opportunities to visit the trials this autumn and in the spring.



Protector Rye in April

Ryegrass or Forage Rye for Early Spring Grazing

What can you plant in September-early October and get significant yield of grazing forage in February and March. Forage Rye or Italian Ryegrass. Irish trials suggest that the difference in yield between the two species by the 1st June is very similar, but Forage Rye will produce 1.4 T/Ha DM more between January and the end of March. The best Forage Rye varieties should produce 3,000 Ewe grazing days/Ha or 300 cow grazing days before the end of the 1st week in April. **Protector Rye** and **Cyclone Rye** x Ryegrass available now.



Autumn Graze for Optimum Establishment

Early grass management is key to the long term success of a re-seed. All the components of a grass mixture establish at different speeds. There is a danger that the more vigorous components of a mixture can smother the slower establishing and more persistent species and the clovers if the sward is not grazed off in the autumn. This swamping occurs in much the same way as vigorous weeds like Chickweed can ruin an establishing ley.

This leads to a more open sward in the spring, earlier ingress of weed species and failure to reach optimum performance. High covers of un-grazed grass can also be more vulnerable to winter kill, and attract more Crane Fly (Leather Jackets) so graze with young cattle, or sheep. If you don't have access to an appropriate class of stock, consider letting the grazing to a sheep farmer – They can bring their own fencing.



Better Weed Control and Keep the Clover

There are a limited number of herbicides available for the control of key broad leaved weeds in establishing grass, especially if you want to protect seedling clovers. There are options, but they only control problem weeds if used in the early stages of the weed's development, so it is of paramount importance that farmers walk their establishing leys 3-4 weeks after sowing. If there are problems take immediate action. Do not wait until spring when control of Docks and thistles becomes difficult and weeds like Chickweed and Brassicas have already smothered young grasses and clovers.



A Full Cob of Sergio

Maize Looking Good – New Varieties Listed

The UK maize list for 2015 has now been published. Two varieties introduced by Field Options in 2014 have been added to the 1st choice lists showing excellent yield, stability and very high feed quality: **Sergio** is very early, ripening between Activate and Ambition. It has exceptional vigour, good yield and very good feed quality. **Asgaard** is about ten days later, a very high yielding variety for more favourable areas. In its group it has the highest feed quality available. Both varieties combine high starch with high fibre digestibility for optimum feed performance. They are also performing well over as very wide geographical area from Denmark to Northern Ireland, proving adaptability to a range of locations.

Sergio and Asgaard can be seen alongside established varieties at Field Option's trials across the country alongside two further new hybrids, **Rodriguez** and **Vandiamond**, both due for listing for 2016. **Contact to office for information on trial sites in your area.**

Look Out for Frit Fly this Autumn?

If you sow a grass to grass re-seed in the autumn, the establishing grass (& cereal) seedlings are vulnerable to damage from a number of pests, but most damaging are probably Frit-Fly larvae. The pest is 2-3 mm long and burrows into the stem base of tillers. It is endemic in established grassland and mature plants can cope with losing a few tillers, but establishing seedlings may only have one shoot – An attack is then terminal.

Look out for yellow shoots. The newest leaf dies and can easily be pulled out of the leaf sheath at the point where the larvae have bitten off young leaf. There is a range of resistance. Italian Ryegrasses are more susceptible than Perennials and Timothy is rarely damaged. Good seedbed consolidation is beneficial - grass establishes faster and pest mobility is reduced. If you have symptoms, discuss using an appropriate insecticide with your agronomist.

To avoid Frit Fly damage, you either need a 5 week fallow period or use Chlorpiriphos based insecticide immediately after sowing. In future we hope to offer perennial Ryegrass varieties with resistance to Frit Fly and other insect pests based on selections of naturally occurring endophytes. These are saprophytic fungi which contain low levels of alkaloids which potentially kill the larvae.



Classic Symptoms & The Larvae



Wholecrop Options

Which autumn cereal is best for wholecrop? Optimum yield depends on what best suits your land and soils, the place in the rotation, when the land is available for drilling and the type of silage required. The ratio of grain to straw and the digestibility of the straw determine energy density. Barley and Wheat will probably produce the best feed quality, followed by Oats, then Triticale and finally Rye, the poorest. Whether it is for milk, meat, dry stock or gas. Grow what you and your land grow best, if it suits the diet.



Protect Your Investment in Silage - Avoid Losses

Aerobic losses in maize and wholecrop cereal silage range from less than 5% to more than 25%. Ensiling forage can be considered an art. It is important to put it in layers and consolidate the silage, packing it tight to drive out as much air as possible. The clamp should be sealed fast and ideally allowed to fully ferment for 3 weeks. Silage should then be cut out with a shear grab, shear bucket or rotary silage defacer, to minimise losses due to aerobic spoilage. Field Options staff can offer guidance....



Clamp Management and Silage Inoculant

There is a strong case for using inoculants to enhance the initial fermentation promoting optimum fermentation and boosting silage quality, but, most importantly, products should be proven to suppress yeast and moulds that cause aerobic spoilage on the exposed face of a clamp. This is where risk of losses in maize and other high dry matter silages is greatest and particularly important for farmers feeding maize through the warmer seasons of the year. Inoculants available from Field Options.



Maize Harvest – Stubble Bust Immediately

Best Practice: Stubble bust Immediately after harvesting maize – On all soil types. If you have compaction issues, dig a hole find the problem and use a cultivator or subsoiler that will work effectively 5-10 cm below any pan. If there is only surface compaction, don't go any deeper than you have to, it is a waste of time energy and money.

The Result: Winter rainfall will drain through the soil profile. Risk of runoff is radically reduced. Land can be accessed earlier in the spring for slurry or muck application. Spring field work will be easier.