

# Your New Pasture - The first 12 months

We realize that there is a lot more involved in establishing a successful pasture than simply purchasing top quality seed and introducing it into your paddock.

It will take 12 months of care and attention before a new pasture could be considered successfully established. Particular care with the grazing management for this 12 month period is one of the critical elements required if long term persistence is to be achieved. At the end of this period you should aim to have a dense, well tillered plant that has survived its first summer.

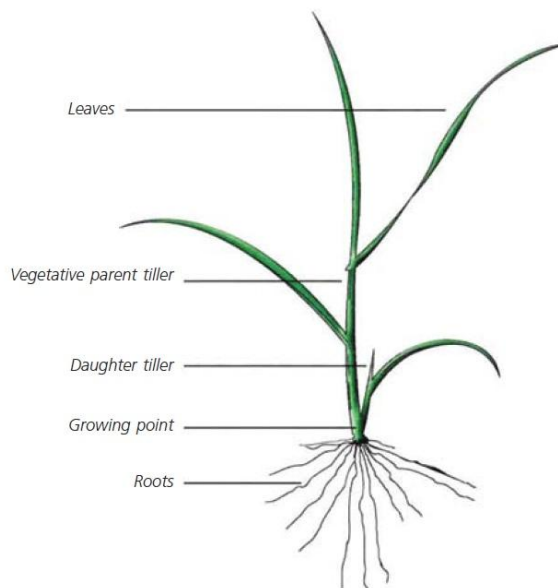
## Understanding what a tiller is

All ryegrass plants produce tillers, the more tillers they can produce the longer they will persist. Perennials persist better than annuals, Italians and hybrids because they can produce more tillers.

Individual plants are made up from clumps of tillers and new tillers are produced year round with large numbers produced in the spring.

Individual tillers can only support 3 leaflets at a time, the correct time to graze pastures is between 2.5 and 3 leaflets per tiller. Tillers keep producing new leaflets all the time, once the new leaflet starts to take shape the oldest one starts to die off.

This is the reason you should graze frequently as the dying and dead tillers have very little feed value but can rapidly build up at the base of your pastures.



## The first grazing

Your new pasture will establish better if grazed frequently as it will encourage the ryegrass to produce more tillers, help stop shading of the slower establishing clovers and keep the M/E values higher.

Typically 6-8 weeks after drilling your new pasture should be grazed, normally it will be between 8-10 cm high (between 2,000 and 2500 kgs DM per hectare) and it should be grazed down to between 3- 5 cm high (between 1,000 and 1500 kgs DM per hectare).



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Before grazing check to see that the new pasture cannot be pulled out of the ground easily using the “pluck test” Always use young stock for this new grazing.

Avoid: Delaying the first grazing, pugging,

## Second and subsequent grazings

As you will notice new pasture grows more rapidly and will require more frequent grazing. It's important to maintain a constant post graze residual of around 1500 kgs DM per hectare and don't let the new pasture go above 3500 kgs DM per hectare as they start to lose quality once they get above this height. Keeping your new pasture between these values will help you achieve high growth rates and high quality pastures.

Avoid: Overgrazing, letting pasture get too long, re stocking pastures after dry periods to quickly, making hay / silage in the first year.

## Nitrogen in new pastures

Many of our clients only fertilise new grass when drilling their new pastures because a weed problem needs to be addressed that may require chemicals harmful to newly establishing clovers.

However even if you have sown your new pastures with clovers they will not produce much nitrogen for the first 9 -12 months. Because of this we suggest small (i.e. 25 kgs /N/Ha) but frequent applications of nitrogen often for this first year. The first application should occur after your first grazing. Avoid applying N when the ground temperatures drop below 8°C or your pastures get to wet.



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## Weed Control in new pasture

Weeds compete with new sown pasture for light, moisture and nutrients, and they usually grow faster than the clover and ryegrasses you sow

Broadleaf weeds will limit a newly sown pasture to reach its full potential due to moisture, nutrient and sunlight competition. A simple weed control programme is vital to ensure the best possible establishment of your valuable new pasture

The choice of chemical required will in part be determined by the weed spectrum, moisture, soil temperature and other weather conditions at time of spraying.

Weeds are normally controlled either pre the 1<sup>st</sup> graze or post the 1<sup>st</sup> graze, below are some commonly used chemicals that are readily available.

### Chemical Options:

#### **Tandem: (MCPB 375 g/litre + MCPA 25 g/litre)**

Tandem is normally used pre the first grazing and is a clover friendly herbicide which is best applied 6 to 10 weeks after sowing when the clover has reached the 2 trifoliolate leaf stage. Weeds should be small and actively growing for good results. Soil temperatures should be 10- 12°C and the day time temperature should be warm. If the pasture cover limits weed exposure lightly graze and spray 5 – 7 days later.

#### **Ammo Max: (2,4-D amine 720 g/litre)**

A popular and time tested post the first graze chemical Ammo Max is also a clover friendly herbicide however it has to be used later when the clover has reached the 3 trifoliolate leaf stage and after the first graze. The purpose of grazing is to limit the clover leaf area and open up the pasture exposing the target weeds. Leave for 5 – 7 days to freshen before application. **Ammo Max** has a wide weed spectrum and will control some weeds too large for **Tandem**.

#### **Blast: (Flumetsulam 800g/kg)**

**Blast** is a good broadleaf herbicide to increase the weed spectrum of **Tandem** and **Ammo Max**. This is a good option if chickweed and mallow are problems. Do not graze pasture for 14 days after application.



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Do not apply any of these herbicides above if the weeds are under temperature or moisture stress. If a pasture herb such as Chicory has been sown **Blast** becomes the **only** herbicide of choice.

*Specialty Seeds would like to acknowledge the help received from Orion Chemicals (Website: [www.orion.co.nz](http://www.orion.co.nz)) in writing this brochure. For more information on any of these products (Ammo Max, Blast and Tandem) please [contact Specialty Seeds \(www.specseed.co.nz\)](http://www.specseed.co.nz).*



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