

The only seed company I know of that recommends correct seeding rates per hectare at about the same as I have done successfully for 50 years, is Specialty Seeds NZ Ltd, Box 29-389, Fendalton, Christchurch 8540, NZ or 76a Hayton Road, Sockburn, Christchurch 8042. Email: mail@specseed.co.nz Free phone: 0800 727 8873. www.specseed.co.nz

High sowing rates and drilling cause overcrowding which stunts and weakens the seedlings, and costs more. When so thick, they are starved of space and fertility. They also need space for clovers to feed them N.

Specialty Seeds carries a wide range of seeds and will seek what is requested. Some seed companies have very few brands and recommend theirs against all others. The AR toxic endophyte agents are the worst.

The above is not an advert, it is what I and others have found.

Some big farmers buy seeds direct from seed growers, but be careful. What guarantee do you have that you are getting what you have ordered?

A problem not always allowed for is that germination can be satisfactory after a number of years, but the ability of the germinated seeds to grow into healthy strong plants, declines with age because the endophyte dies. So check the seeds age.

Whatever seeds you buy, inspect them and test at least 20 of each for germination on tissue paper and covered with a plastic elastic cover well before sowing. At least 90% should germinate within five days. Also check that you get what you ordered. An Oregon, USA company was fined \$100,000 for illegal labelling and in New Zealand I've seen Forager Chicory growing where Puna Chicory was ordered and paid for, and a winter ryegrass growing where none was ordered.

Panicum, a bad weed grass that is very high in toxic nitrates, came with and grew with Shirohie millet from Australia. Farmers must know about possible disasters and check for them.

Suggested Waikato high fertility mix at kg/ha, Superstrike coated and inoculated legumes.

kg/ha

10 Trojan NEA2 Diploid = 200 seeds per m²

10 Bealey NEA2 Tetraploid = 150 seeds per m²

2 Best cocksfoot for your area. = 100 per m².

0.1 Best Timothy for your area = 30 seeds/m²

0.2 Weka white clover = 30 seeds/m²

0.2 Tahora 2 white clover, the highest N producer = 30/m². I've seen greener ryegrass around Tahora.

1 Colenso or best Red clover or best for your area = 10 seeds/m²

0.2 Endurance Plantain = 12/m²

0.2 Choice or the best Chicory = 40/m²

0.1 Massey Basyn Velvet Grass (Yorkshire Fog) is good for poor areas, variety and bloat control = 30 seeds per m². I've seen cows eat the Velvet Grass in preference to others.

Impact perennial ryegrass has been reported to cause bad ryegrass staggers.

Don't let anyone sell you Kopu large leaf white clover even for a cheap special price, except for a one or two year pastures, because it was bred from an annual clover so doesn't last.

Avoid plain Bealey which has no NEA2 endophyte, to control insects which is OK in the deep south, but not in the north.

Never buy any AR endophyte ryegrasses because cows don't like them so milk drops and it causes ryegrass staggers, especially if your selenium is low, which most are, especially on organic farms because Selcote Ultra selenium fertiliser is not allowed, which is another pathetic rule. NEA2 endophyte is far superior. Cows love it and milk increases by two litres per cow per day, depending on the time of the year. I've seen AR endophyte a foot high in the same trial where Bealey NEA2 was grazed to the ground.

If your supplier claims a better proven variety for your area, check with a grower or two before

deciding.

When too thick, plants are starved of space and fertility. They also need space for clovers to grow and feed them N.

If you don't have a seed sower, you can mix seed with some held back LimePlus or safe phosphate mix.

Chico: - Chico is a high yielding, very high quality and leafy chicory showing fast establishment, rapid re-growth, strong insect resistance and good drought tolerance.

Choice: - Grasslands Choice was bred in New Zealand, selected for high dry matter production, improved cool season growth, reduced lactucin levels, and improved persistence.

Grouse: - Grouse was bred at Ceres Research Centre in New Zealand, to provide upright, uniformly leaved chicory with a longer seasonal growth pattern from early spring to late autumn-winter.

Puna 2: - Grasslands Puna II is a New Zealand bred broad-leaved, perennial forage herb bred from true perennial chicory parents. Puna II has high nutritional quality, producing high yields from spring to late autumn.

Punter: - SF Punter provides high energy forage with proven animal health benefits and increased animal production. Very strong summer and autumn growth as well as very good cool season production.