Newsletter 61 8 March 2012

Grazing Subscribers

Chisel plough for sale

A small five tyne chisel plough is for sale for $2,000 plus GST in Taranaki. Contact Glen & Jen Bakewell <gjbakewell@hotmail.com>

We don't usually advertise like this, but second hand chisel ploughs are hard to get and every farm should have one and I'd prefer a GrazingInfo subscriber to get one.

Good news

Waikato and some other areas have had the best summer for rainfall and pasture growing since 1955, which is when I arrived in the Waikato and bought our first farm. The South Island West Coast and Southland have had the more sunshine than for a long time.

Sympathy

Our sympathy goes to those who suffered earthquakes, floods (New South Wales the worst since 150 years ago, so take note global warmers, it was not created by recent or any farmer pollution) and more recently, tornado sufferers that are annual events in parts of USA.

Maize silage

Some will soon be making maize silage which must have salt added evenly. I've seen hungry cows eat that with salt and leave (waste) that without salt. Spread the silage thinly on stacks or pits and then use a tractor mounted spreader to spread coarse agricultural salt at 1 kg per 1,000 kg of maize. More information is in Forage Crops > Maize.

Harvest the maize as soon as ready, not when the kernels are so hard that they can't be chewed, so go out in the dung, which can also be caused by the silage being cut so short that ruminants can't regurgitate and chew it. Every second forager blade may have to be removed. Good correctly cut silage 5 cm, or longer, is worth about 40 cents a kg, while that cut too short is worth only half as much because it is not well digested. Read Forage Crops > Maize/Corn and see the photo of kernels in the dung, so lost.

Pasture seed mixes

Apologies for the lateness. It is not in GrazingInfo under Pastures because mixes change frequently after failures and new releases. I've been checking last years sowings until yesterday.

AR1 is reported to not be effective and many have found AR37 to be disliked by animals so it is not grazed short, resulting in thick thatch with facial eczema spores galore, while Bealey NEA2 and the high sugar ryegrasses increase milk by 2 litres per cow per day, and are grazed shorter, so have less thatch.

I must add that adequate lime-plus (lime and synergistic elements) and correct ryegrasses and grazing completely, eliminated facial eczema from our pastures without using any zinc from 1958 to 1987 when we sold our last farm, while neighbours had facial eczema cows in their back paddocks.

A seed company emailed me, "We are certainly hearing feedback from many farmers about AR37 being less palatable, so it is hard to ignore, whereas we hear that cows love Bealey NEA2. My findings in the Gordonton and other trials are the same.

A farmer who wrote a publicity article about how wonderful Commando AR37 was, a few years ago stopped sowing it after only one year, because his cows didn't like it, but it was published again, to his annoyance.

There seems to be no doubt that NEA2 is the best endophyte. It is now available in Trojan Diploid as well as Bealey Tetraploid. Both are available with NEA2 endophyte or without it, so if your farm is in an insect area of the North Island or northern parts of the South Island, stipulate NEA2.

Agriseeds say that given the amount of Trojan sold, they have had relatively few problems, with the vast majority of comments being good.

With regard to ryegrass pulling, go into the Agriseeds web site -
http://www.agriseeds.co.nz/downloads/2012%20Trojan%20tech%20manual.pdf

A dozen ryegrasses are listed.

Remember that superphosphate and water soluble fertilisers increase it and lime and reactive phosphates reduce it without fail since my first trials 30 years ago.

Pasture mix in kg

10 Trojan NEA2 endophyte with low Lolitrem B so less ryegrass staggers. 250 seeds/m2.

6 Bealey NEA2 endophyte which has low Lolitrem B so less ryegrass staggers equals 150 seeds per m2.

0.5 Best Cocksfoot for your area equals 50 per m2.

0.3 Best Timothy for your area equals 80 per m2.

0.5 Tahora 2 white clover, the highest N producer equals 70 per m2.

0.5 Kotare and Weka each white clovers.

0.5 Best lucerne for your area. There are new ones bred for New Zealand grazing and conditions called Rhino and SuperSonic.

0.5 Best red clover for your area, but not if pasture tissue K is above 3.65% because red clovers won't survive.

0.1 Massey Basyn Velvet Grass for poor areas, variety and bloat control = 60 seeds per m2.

0.2 Plantain at 10 per m2. Tonic or better one for cattle or Lancelot for sheep and heavily stocked dairy farms.

If you are committed to the RD 1 Trojan mix, add 25% Bealey NEA2 and ½ a kg of Tahora 2 and Tonic or better Plantain at ¼ kg per hectare, in a total mix of about 22 kg per hectare into a perfect smooth, even firm seedbed and rolled twice unless wet and raining.

Clovers

Tall clovers such as Kopu 2 won't survive mob stocking with sheep or continued hard grazing as can occur under set-stocked beef.

Kopu being bred in the north from the short lived Ladino, makes it also short lived. I've had it disappear in one year of overgrazing and in three years in my garden trials without any grazing. Half the trial was cut fortnightly and half monthly. One Kopu plant lasted the longest in the monthly cutting. Please tell me if you have Kopu lasting longer.

The Bealey NEA2 yielded more in the two weekly cutting than the monthly, but it is irrigated.

In most mixes I suggest sowing an equal mix of 0.5 kg per hectare of Kotare, Weka and Tahora 2 white clovers per hectare as above. Tahora produces much more N than others.

Sowing

Don't leave seed in toxic fertilisers or limes (boron is toxic). Mix, sow and cover into Cambridge rolled moist soil immediately. Then roll twice by double rolling (taking half a width at a time).

Don't drill seeds in. It overcrowds them so many die. They can't live millimetres apart so those that survive are weaker. Broadcast seed or put a horizontal 5 cm or larger pipe across the drill and have the seed drop onto it and bounce rather than run done down the tubes and end up too close together.

Oversowing rates can be 50% of the above.

New Zealand trial conducted by AgResearch AberDart was 23% ahead in year 2 and 17% ahead in year 3 for dry matter production of the mean of Bronsyn* and Impact. Over the three years AberDart was 11% ahead of the mean of Bronsyn and Impact. Sowing Rate was 16 to 18 kg/ha. AberDart HSG Diploid has smaller seed so needs lower sowing rates than other grasses.

*Yatsyn pulled badly. In the 1970s I wrote about it and was threatened, so I told them to come to the Waikato and take the survivors and bread from them, hence Bronsyn.

Farms and their management vary, so the best way to get the best pasture for your farm is to try them. Trials found no difference between AberDart high-sugar grass and "standard New Zealand ryegrass" which is not comparing apples with apples because the NZ one could have AR37 endophyte which is disliked by animals while AberDart high-sugar grass with AR1 animals prefer to AR37, but may not be as effective at controlling insects, although all insect damage of pastures I've seen since Argentine stem weevil 30 years ago to Black Beetles now has been exaggerated. In 2011 I went to several farms claiming Black Beetle damage when it was not, it was a lack of calcium and its synergisms. At a field day on a so called Black Beetle paddock 100 farmers, some with spades, found only six.

The high sugar grasses claim improved digestion, especially of protein, which is the most important element of all for financial reward in milk and meat.

DairyNZ should earn their keep by doing correct comparisons of all new pasture species soon after they are launched. By correct, I mean not like the one they did on ryegrass sowing rates on Scott Farm that had half a dozen serious mistakes.

Winter ryegrasses

Tabu yields 50% more than Tama over the complete growing season to January, but Tama yields more initially.

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About half a dozen after every newsletter have to be contacted for their new information.

Thanks

Vaughan Jones
GrazingInfo Ltd