

Benefits of regrassing



Introduction

There are many benefits to regrassing such as:

- The opportunity to take advantage of a new advance in pastures (such as novel endophytes)
- The opportunity to re-establish a pasture species lost to pests (such as white clover lost to clover root weevil)
- The opportunity to alleviate or remedy soil damage such as pugging
- The opportunity to address a serious weed and/or pest problem

The Cropmark Seeds technical sheet titled “Why renovate pastures?” covered the basic costs and benefits of renovating a pasture. This sheet further explains the potential benefits of regrassing such as increased yield, improved quality and a better match between seasonal growth and demand.

Benefits of regrassing – Yield

Data shows that Matrix yields 4800 kgDM/ha more than Nui¹, which valued at 15 cents per kgDM is worth \$720/ha. Dexcel data² for a dairy scenario valued it at 20 cents equating to an advantage of \$960/ha. Compared with the leading competitor Matrix grows an extra 860 kgDM per year (16,560 versus 15,700) is worth \$170/ha per year for the life of the pasture (at 20 cents per kgDM). This illustrates the opportunity regrassing with a better performing variety presents and the potential for increased income.

Benefits of regrassing – Quality

Revolution - AR1™ enhanced ryegrass, Cropmarks’ new AR1™ perennial grass has in trial work on farms across New Zealand recorded an average ME level of 10.9 versus 10.6 for its nearest current competitor. Using the Dexcel figures this is worth \$115 per MJME or \$345/ha per year for the life of the pasture. Compared with Nui, the basis of many older pastures in New Zealand, the advantage is 1.3 MJME/kgDM. This would therefore be worth \$1495/ha per year for the life of the pasture.

Benefits of regrassing – Seasonal Yield

Analysis was conducted by Agricultural Business Associates, using UDDER™, and data including the seasonal yield data collected from on farm trials. It was found that Matrix yielded more drymatter than its nearest competitor (16.6 versus 15.3 T DM), supported a higher stocking rate (3.7 versus 3.5), produced more milk solids (1,352 versus 1,273 kgMS) and returned a greater net margin (\$3,220 versus \$3,055). An issue raised in the report which is not apparent in these figures is that Matrix yielded more than its competitors particularly in the shoulders of the season. This is when feed is often scarce and therefore most valuable. This attribute is what enabled the higher stocking rate.

Planting a new pasture using a high performing cultivar will produce more than an older one and if a variety such as Matrix is used, much of this additional growth will occur both early and late in the season when feed is most valuable.

Benefits of regrassing – Novel Endophytes

Recent research published by Dexcel³ found an 8.9% increase in milksolids production when comparing an AR1™ variety pasture to a standard version of the same cultivar in a 3 year farmlet trial. Revolution AR1™, Cropmarks’ new AR1™ perennial grass will offer this same potential plus the advantages of a greater drymatter yield (16,419 versus 15,087) and a higher ME level (10.9 versus 10.6) over the cultivar used in this trial. This means 11.9% more energy produced per hectare for the life of the pasture compared with Bronsyn AR1™, a leading competitor.

Conclusion

Regrassing has many benefits including the opportunity to sow a new cultivar that produces more feed, particularly when it matters, and higher quality feed.

Footnotes

- 1, Nui is used because it is a ‘standard’ existing cultivar. The Nui was grown side by side with the Matrix in on-farm trials under common management
- 2, http://www.dexcel.co.nz/data/usr/dex_aut_05_p18-19.pdf
- 3, <http://www.rsnz.org/publish/nzjar/2005/026.php>

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