TECHNICAL NEWS

Lakeland AGRI

July/August 2020 | ROI Version

Don't underestimate the benefits of reseeding

Alan Hurst, Lakeland Agri, Technical and Product Manager

Grass reseeding is one of the best paying investments on a livestock farm, with a payback in under two years on dairy farms. Newly reseeded swards are more responsive to fertiliser and are more digestible, resulting in improved livestock performance.

Benefits of a new reseed versus old permanent pasture:

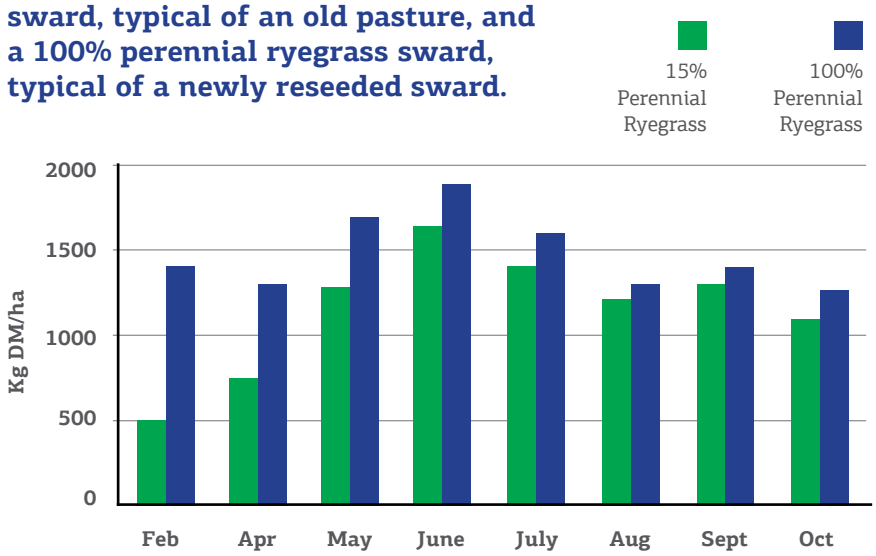
- Increased sward digestibility (higher animal performance)
- Increased sward productivity (30% more grass annually)
- More responsive to nitrogen (+24%)
- Significantly higher level of grass growth in spring (See Figure 1)

As seen from Figure 1, the dry matter production is also vastly superior in the shoulders of the year in a newly reseeded sward, exactly when the farm needs it.

Plan in advance

Now is an ideal time to plan for any remaining paddocks that need to be reseeded in 2020. Paddocks with low levels of perennial ryegrass may have been identified as underperforming over the last number of seasons. Recent soil tests should be checked for any underlying soil fertility issues to ensure the perennial ryegrass gets established properly and survives in the sward going forward. All grassland earmarked for reseeding should be burned off with a suitable glyphosate-based product (Round Up or Gallup). Aim to have all reseeding completed by the end of August, to allow sufficient time to control weeds if present and/or grazed with light stock before closing for the winter. This will help promote tillering in the new sward.

Figure 1: Production difference between a 15% perennial ryegrass sward, typical of an old pasture, and a 100% perennial ryegrass sward, typical of a newly reseeded sward.



Our 2020 grass seed mixtures:
At Lakeland Agri, our aim is to supply the highest performing grass seed mixtures to our milk suppliers and feed customers. They include:

- LFS Cut and Graze - Formulated to maximise yield, quality and persistency when used for silage but also to provide a high quality sward when used for grazing.
- LFS High Density - Designed to perform and persist in the more challenging soil types.
- LFS Intensive Grazing – Excellent spring and autumn growth. Formulated to deliver a highly digestible sward across the entire grazing season.
- For more information on any of the above grass seed mixtures, visit **www.lakeland.ie/agribusiness/grass-seed-mixtures**

GRASS SEED DELIVERY

Avail of our direct delivery to farms, with **free delivery** available on orders of **10 bags or more.**

For more information on autumn reseeding or to choose a suitable grass seed mixture from the Lakeland Agri Range, please visit www.lakeland.ie, contact your local Lakeland Agri sales representative or call our Customer Service Centre on 1890 47 47 20.

Simple solutions for grassland weed control

Christopher Cahill, Lakeland Agri Technical & Nutritional Support Representative

Weed infestation can be one of the largest hidden costs on farms across the country and will result in a direct reduction on grass growth. For example, a 10% dock infestation equates to a 10% grass yield loss. Imagine for every 10 bales you grow, harvest and store, you must give away one of them. This can equate to €160/ha/year of a yield loss from this level of an infestation.

5 most common grassland weeds


Docks


Thistles


Chickweed


Nettles


Buttercups

Common weeds and tips for control:

- The first step in an effective grassland weed control programme is to identify the weeds present in the sward and the level of infestation.
- If the weed infestation is manageable and the sward is generally productive, herbicide application is a cost effective approach to increase sward productivity versus reseeding.
- Some weeds are annual weeds; therefore, they grow for one year. Mechanical destruction (mulching/ mowing) of these weeds before they get to seed can be an effective weed control strategy.
- If spraying is deemed necessary, identify the product most suitable to address the weeds present. For example, if there is docks only in the sward, there is no requirement to use a spray that also kills thistles, nettles, etc.
- It is important to identify if there is clover present in the sward, as a clover safe spray will need to be used in those scenarios.
- Identify the intended use of the grass sward. If grazing, it is important to allow at least 7 days post herbicide application before grazing. In a silage sward, an interval of 21 days or more may be required between herbicide application and cutting date. **(As different herbicides carry different grazing or cutting intervals, it is essential labels are fully read before use and all label recommendations regarding rates of application and the respective intervals are adhered to).**
- When you have identified the weeds present, and established the correct herbicide for use, it is then important to determine if it is the correct time to utilise the spray. To get the best results from your spray application, the plant must be in a vegetative state and actively growing. This ensures maximum translocation of the spray to the roots of the weed plant.
- If the plant has passed this point and in its reproductive stage and starting to put seed heads up, it would be preferable to cut the weed plant and to target the application of herbicide in the new, freshly growing plant. The same rules apply to spraying during periods of stress, such as a drought, when the level of translocation to the roots is reduced. Spraying during periods of drought will not only result in poor weed control, it may also damage the grass and clover component of the sward.

For further information on herbicide usage, or a consultation to create an effective weed control programme, contact Christopher Cahill on 087 1934502 or call the Lakeland Agri Customer Service Centre on 1890 47 47 20.

Timing is key when it comes to dock control


TOO EARLY


JUST RIGHT


TOO LATE

Future paved out with Robotics for Laois farm family

The Carnegie family certainly do not do things by halves, so when the decision was made in 2013 to convert some of their farm to milk production, they embraced the challenge to venture into unchartered territory with huge success.

Gwen and Trevor from Derrylough, near Rosenallis in Co. Laois were originally suckler beef farmers, bringing all progeny through to finish. However, with diminishing beef returns and a young family on the way, they knew something had to change. They had 100 hectares of grazable ground available to them, so they knew the potential was certainly there.

Lely Milking Robot Installation

After a meeting with Niall McGauran of Lely Center Mullingar, they decided that robotics was the way forward, and in 2013, a Lely Astronaut A4 milking robot was installed on their farm. The farm has grown from strength to strength on the back of the success of the first robot and the initial herd of 60 cows. In 2015, a second Lely robot was added. In 2016 a new dairy shed was erected, which put the family on course for further dairy expansion, and in 2018 and March 2020, a third and fourth robot were added to the existing system. This has resulted in an expansion of the herd from 60 cows to 235 cows milking today, allowing them to maximise the full potential of their grazing block.

Herd Output

One would be forgiven for thinking that solids output per cow might not have been a core priority during this rapid expansion programme, however this could not be further from the truth. **In 2019, the herd produced 485kg of milk solids, at 3.98% butterfat and 3.42% protein, all while going through an expansion phase and with 50% of the herd as heifers.** This year's ICBF Herdplus performance report details five stars for fat and protein kgs per cow, and the same accolade for litres per cow per day and protein %. **The milk output achieved in 2019 required 800kgs of a high specification Lakeland Agri Dairy Nut per cow together with 600kg of fodder beet and 50kgs of barley per cow.** This highlights the Carnegie's reliance on high quality grass for milk production. They aim to reseed a minimum of 10% of the farm per year, and have been working hard on addressing soil pH, P and K status since their conversion to dairy. They started measuring grass this year to help increase grass utilisation further and took their first cut of silage on the 15th of May to maximise quality.

Fertility Performance

The fertility performance of the herd is also equally impressive. Last year, the herd achieved a **72% spring 6-week calving rate** and had just 12% empty at the end of the breeding season last year.

Their breeding season this year started on the 23rd April. They had a **76% 21-day submission rate in their cows,** and a **95% 21-day submission rate in their heifers.** They relied completely on the technology of the Lely robot to identify cows that were bulling and to draft them out into a separation paddock for two rounds of AI. Two "mop up" bulls then follow this. This strategy has shown great results, **with a 1st service conception rate of 68% in the cows and 100% in the heifers.** This herd is a testament to showing that it is indeed possible to get a high output herd, with high levels of fertility, and it is further testament to the ability and drive of this family behind the wheel.

Gwen and Trevor Carnegie with their three children.

Lakeland Agri Technical Support

The family work closely with **Barney Tighe, their Technical Sales Representative in Lakeland Agri, on ration selection** at the various stages of the lactation. **When further detailed advice on cow performance through the Lely robotic system is required, they communicate directly with Alan Hurst, Lakeland Agri Technical & Product Manager, who is Lely trained and Lely FMS accredited.** He has extensive experience on Lely robotic systems both in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland and is equally adept when dealing with both housed and grazing systems.

Future Plans

Gwen and Trevor's vision for the future of their farm is to maximise the output of their herd through the four Lely Astronaut robots. They aim to **grow 15 tonnes of grass dry matter per hectare** as the base for feeding their herd, and **to produce 600kg of milk solids per cow on approximately 1.5 tonne meal.** They are actively looking at calving a portion (20%) of the herd in the autumn time to spread labour requirements, and their most important vision for the future is to enjoy the lifestyle associated with robotic farming and spend time with their 3 young children Joshua (aged 4), William (3) and Jessica (1).

The Carnegies had the following to say about their experience in robotic farming;

> "Since we started milk production, we have relied on the product selection and the technical expertise of Lakeland Agri and Lely Center Mullingar, which we have been extremely pleased with. The cows have been milking well, their fertility is excellent, and we put this down to using the correct ration at the various stages of the year and to having the robot set up to perform at the highest standards by the technical teams in Lakeland Agri and Lely. We would have no hesitation in recommending both parties to others looking to maximise performance in herd's similar to our own."

Benefits of feeding weanlings in late summer

Christopher Cahill, Lakeland Agri, Technical & Nutritional Support Representative

The success to any suckler calf-to-weanling or indeed finishing system will be maximising performance from excellent quality grass. There is a period throughout the year where good quality grass can support more than 1kg of live-weight gain, however, as the year moves on grass quality begins to decline.

The key to maintaining performance with your weanlings is the quality of the feed used in conjunction with the grass. It is well documented that even with good quality grass at the forefront of the weanling's diet, the inclusion of a good quality calf/weanling ration can provide a 2:1 return on investment.

When selling weanlings, buyers like to see a well-grown quality animal, and likewise if finishing the animal, it is important to grow the animal while they are young as it is the most cost-effective time to do so. When paired with good quality grazed grass, a weanling's response to concentrates can be as high as 4:1, i.e. for every 4kg concentrate input = 1kg live-weight gain output. Comparing this to an older animal trying to gain weight over the winter-housed period, the response to concentrate can be as low as 6-7:1.

The **Lakeland Agri Super Weanling Pellet** is 16 % crude protein, with protein derived from soyabean meal. The **Lakeland Agri Super Weanling Pellet** is also extremely energy dense, utilising **barley** and **maize** as its energy sources. It also has added **yeast** and **essential oils** to aid in maintaining optimum rumen function to drive performance, and finally, it contains a **high-spec mineral package** to ensure that the mineral demands of the weanling are met regardless of the mineral status of the sward, and even in the presence of mineral antagonists. When compared to coarse rations, the Lakeland Agri Super Weanling Pellet has less issues with birds (less waste), and ensures that each mouthful of feed that the animal consumes is perfectly balanced.

€20 /tonne off RRP

on Lakeland Agri's Super Weanling Pellet between 5th July and 5th September 2020.

SPECIAL OFFER

Super Weanling Pellet

+1 KG LIVE-WEIGHT GAIN

Potential conversions
4 kg Super Weanling Pellet fed to young actively growing weanlings delivers an extra 1 kg of live-weight gain

2:1

Very High Return on Investment (2:1) €2 worth of live-weight gain for every €1 spent on the Super Weanling Pellet

Produces a Stronger Animal
A premium quality animal that will achieve premium market price

Super Weanling Pellet Key Features:

- Consistent Nutrient Supply
- Very High Energy Density
- High Quality Starch & Protein Sources
- Rumen Enhancers
- Unique Mineral Package

For more information, please contact your Lakeland Agri sales representative or call our Customer Services Centre on **1890 47 47 20**

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Lakeland RumiSmart SUSTAIN

Delivering Sustainable Feeding Solutions