

Management of Common Rush in Organic Management Systems

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Soft/Common Rush - Issues

- Problem of competition in permanent pasture & rough grazing Made worse in:
 - Poorly drained soils
 - High rainfall areas
- Dense, deep rooting clumps reduce grazing value of productive sward and compete below the soil
- Huge volume of seeds produced annually – seed bank – high capacity for rapid infestation
- Are you prepared to ‘live with’, control or eradicate?

Stage 1 – Soils

Address underlying problems

1. Drainage
2. Soil structure
3. Liming
4. Soil nutrient status

Starts with soil analysis



Improving grass productivity – stage 2 options

- Liming and fertilising
- Surface seeding
 - Direct drilling
 - Slot seeding
 - Tined harrow seeding
 - Broadcasting
- Reseeding – ultimate control strategy?
 - Deep Ploughing
 - Light surface cultivation and firming
 - Sowing competitive seed mixture
 - Rolling to consolidate

Example Seed Mixture (upland)



<u>Type</u>	<u>%</u>
Hybrid Ryegrass	6.67
Early Perennial Ryegrass	10.00
Intermediate Perennial Ryegrass	13.33
Late Perennial Ryegrass AberBite (T)	41.33
Timothy	13.33
S S Meadow Grass	2.67
Creeping Red Fescue	6.67
White Clover	6.00

Light Infestation – Control by effective Grazing Management



- Avoid excess winter grazing
- Reduce risk of poaching
- Reduce risk of winter kill in sward
- Graze hard in the summer (prevent dominant rush growth)
- Cattle are better – less selective grazers and trampling
- Use topping for management in summer





The role of topping in management



Land improvement strategy – upland

**Bespoke Management
Strategy for each farm**

Productive inbye

Enclosed Improvements

Naturally wet or over
70% rush cover

Summary – but it's a big subject!

- Classify need for land improvement in the context of the farm – Objectives, strengths & weaknesses
- Encourage vigorous grass sward
- Think about how grazing can assist in control on your farm
- Changing climate may make it more difficult to maintain productivity of upland swards
- What about role of agri-environmental schemes?

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- Thanks for listening
 - Questions or Comments?

Further information:

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