

Practical experience of multi species leys for dairy, beef and sheep

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Clyde Jones Bistern Farm



Key Issues

Identified by the discussion group over the last 18 months

- What are other people doing differently from me
- Are these swards as productive as normal swards
- Is there a key component in the composition of the sward
- Crop establishment
- Utilisation rotation length & residual sward height
- Soil Organic Matter

Issue with Ryegrass

Good Points

- Plenty of varietal choice
- Reliable under a range of conditions
- High quality as a result of breeding input

Downside

- Shallow rooting
- Poor Nitrogen scavenging
- Lack of drought tolerance
- Only has 3 living leaves
- Head very quickly and frequently

Measuring Productivity

Plate meters do not provide reliable information
Measure the output over the season

Ley	Yr. 1 T DM / Ha / Yr.	Yr. 2 T DM / Ha / Yr.
Herbal Mix	13.2	10.5
Grass/Clover	13.7	10.6



Farm Performance Over a Season

Platform Performance	1 *	2	3
Proportion of Diverse Swards	44.50%	14.00%	100.00%
Stocking rate (LU / Ha)	2.25	1.09	1.94
Av. Stocking Density (kg / Ha / Day)	59,554	24,080	58,231
Av. Grazing Rotation length (Days)	41	29	46
Milk Solids (Kg / Ha)	1,025	351	686
EC Milk from Grazing (L / Ha)	7,928	3,265	5,589
DM of Silage Removed (tonne / ha)	1.63	2.86	0.74

* Conventional

Sward Composition

How Much Grass ? + or – 60% Depends on site

Species Mix Ryegrass (Italian and or perennial)
Cocksfoot, Timothy Tall Fescue Sheep Fescue
Meadow Fescue Festuolium

Early year bulk v long yield

Legumes mix them up 25-35% by weight
More if large seeds such as vetch or sainfoin.

Herbs 15-20%

Do not purchase on price alone

Understand what is less likely to establish

Digestibility and palatability counts

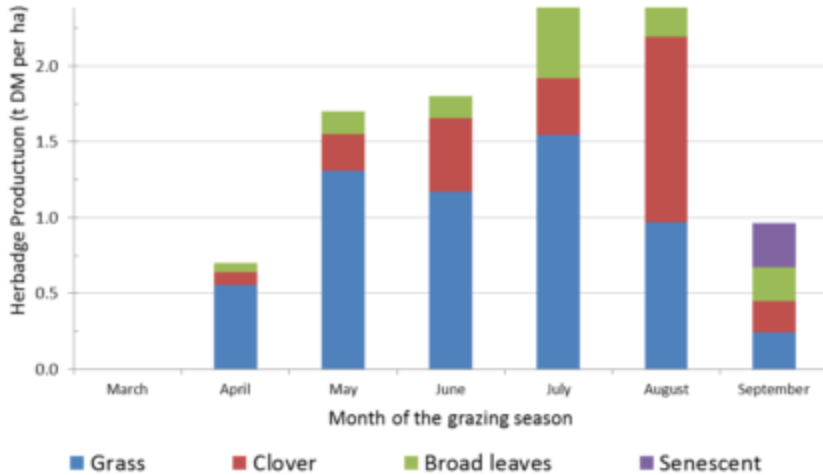


Composition of Sward

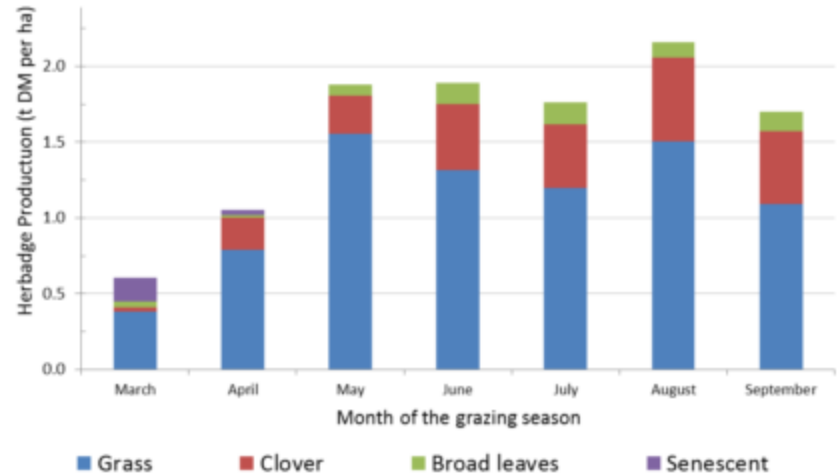
Manor Farm Chedworth 2013 -14

Yield TDM / Ha

Total Production **10.3** 100%



Total Production **11.0** 100%



Establishment

Spring or autumn

Spring under sowing seems to be most reliable

If autumn make sure it is early mid August.

Herb seeds are small so plant shallowly

Give the small seeds some protection.



Utilising Diverse Swards

Ensure clovers / legumes do establish

Do not over graze in the early years

Vary the rotation with the season (18-120 days)

Leave long residuals at least once in the season



Summary

