



COMBATING DROUGHT

We at Wesco Seeds have put together a group of options for farmers to help them prepare for and transition through periods of drought. The pasture swards that have been planted historically are a rye clover base that does perform very very well but when it starts to become too hot and dry the performance slows and stops. This flyer is to stimulate farmers to look at different options and explore which ones would best for their own farm and their own class of stock. In combating drought we need to be prepared and have thought of what options we can use in advance. The key for preparation is to form a consistent policy that you can change over time to help ensure you always have options open.

MILLET

Planted in the late spring early summer when the soil temperature is 17°C and rising, this multi graze/cut crop can yield a great quantity of forage over a very short period of time. Very dominant over weeds this is a crop that has a bit of stamina, surviving and growing in climates that are often harsh and damaging the performance of many rye clover based pastures. Can be grown beside a turnip crop to help to balance out the diet of the cattle it is fed on. Makes some of the best silage that can be made, it is desired by cattle before any other feed stuff which is contra to the science.

Farmer comment drought 2013 JW Bay of plenty farmer "my cows have been living of turnips and millet for the last few months but I have 2 problems, I will need to buy more Fonterra shares and also I didn't plant enough turnips. Cows are milking better than ever"

Sowing rate 25-30kgs

Maturity 45-60 days



TURNIP /BRASSICA WITH MILLET

The inclusion of millet in the blend of turnips /forage brassicas is to help prevent wilting and help shade the soil and plant so that they can perform to the optimum.

Turnips and brassicas that aren't heat stressed are a better quality feed. Sunflowers can also be added to this blend (@ 3-5 kgs/ha) for increased oil and protein content of the crop.

Warmer area mixes (Cooler climates refer to Turnip/Oats)

Turnip 16%

Millet 84%

12-14 kgs/ha

Or Forage brassica 23%

Millet 77%

13-15 kgs/ha

LUCERNE

Valuable perennial that lives up to 10 years with good management. Highly drought tolerant with a tap root that goes deep into the soil. Produces high protein good quality forage with 60-80% of its growth over the late spring till late autumn. Converts atmospheric nitrogen into soil nitrogen to be used with other crops. Can have timothy and cocksfoot planted with it if straight swards aren't desired which helps minimise weed pressure.

VETCHES AND OATS

Vetches are a legume able to convert atmospheric nitrogen into soil nitrogen so it can utilise with its companion plants helping to support the crop grown at present and also the future crops.

Vetches are high in protein and complement oats in a blend very well providing a great crop for grazing or putting into the pit or balage. Vetches were historically grown for the stud stock before a sale but now are held highly for the quality they add to farming systems.

Magnum oats 75%

Vetches 25%

Sowing rate 75-90 kgs/ha

PEAS AND OATS

The bulk king. Provides bulk silage or grazing forage in a short space of time. Has higher protein content than oats alone. Sowing rate depends on the type of oats used. Can grow as high as 1.5 metres high. Sowing rate up to 200 kgs/ha

SORGHUM

Often is a forage hybrid 'is a multi-graze /cut crop. Performs well in the summer period but still needs some moisture. Makes good silage and should be planted when the soil temperature is 16°C and rising.

Weed population needs to be monitored for more productive yield.

Sowing rate 28-35 kgs /ha



CHICORY/PLANTAIN

Two deep rooting herbs that have become a large part of many farmers drought management tool box. Due to the long tap roots they have a tendency to perform well even in the more severe summers. Many farmers are now incorporating into their Chicory and Plantain blend, clovers (red, white and Persian) to help develop a great summer crop. This can be drilled over with perennial Rye, Timothy and Cocksfoot in the autumn.

Can be planted with turnip or brassicas so once they are grazed out you still have a good base to drill in your perennial grasses and clover.

TURNIPS

A good historical high ME crop with low fibre. Planted spring and grazed in the summer or planted in the autumn for winter /early spring grazing. Needs to be grazed in the spring before it goes to seed and losses quality. Great high energy early lactation feed.

Sowing rate 1.5-2.5 kgs/ha

Grazing time 60-90 days variety depending.

RAPE AND TURNIPS

Rape and turnips are becoming increasingly popular as a crop that can have regrowth ability. Recommended to back fence when cattle are grazed on it. Farmer comment "it is like my quick establishing swede and kale crop for the summer". High palatability and good ME. Can have sunflowers added and/or millet

Sowing rate 3-5 kgs/ha

Rape 66%

Turnip 34%

Maturity (Challenger/Kingsford) 60-75 days

TURNIP/OATS

Cooler areas or early autumn plantings

Turnips 3%

Or Forage brassica 5%

Magnum oats 97%

Magnum oats 95%

Sowing rate 50-60kgs/ha

Sowing rate 55-65 kgs/ha



HYF MIX

A great blend that incorporates rape and Italian rye grass blend. The rye has the ability to help minimise any nitrate problems if they are an issue. A high yielding mix that combines to great performers. The Italian rye helps to minimise checking of the rumen digestion when transitioning the stock from a grass based diet to a brassica based diet. Can have Persian or white clovers added for extra bulk. A multi grazing option. Back fence with cattle.

Sowing rate 20 kgs/ha

Maturity minimum 60 – 75 days

FESCUE

Fescue is a grass that can grow longer into the summer period than perennial rye grass hence farms are converting part of the farm into fescue. It needs a lot more management as it can lose its palatability quickly when it is vigorously growing .A quick round is necessary but don't graze it too low . Due to the expedient growth in the spring time only 40- 60 % of your farm should be planted at one time .Farmers describe it as a wonder grass or a nuisance. Whatever your option, it is great if managed well and a pain if you don't, yet it still will grow in the dry summer.

COCKSFOOT

A hardy perennial grass that grows in the cold and in the dry. It does have a reputation to become clumpy yet the more modern varieties are less clumpy and more palatable than their predecessors. Whether you like it or not ... it still keeps growing.

FINE PRINT

The blends in this publication are here as a guide to stimulate options and resources for conversation. Professional advice is always needed and the establishment of the crops is important for the success of the outcome. All seeds need moisture to germinate and moisture throughout the growing season is critical. While we at Wesco take the greatest of care to provide all product true to label there is no Guarantee. We guarantee the germination and the purity except the bushburn mixes. We cannot be liable for poor results due to conditions beyond our control that can be caused by a variety of external factors. Whilst every care has been taken to ensure accuracy and reliability in the information contained in this brochure, no responsibility for the consequences which may arise from the acceptance of the recommendations or suggestions can be accepted, as many other factors come into effect. The recommendation of this brochure are intended for discussion only , and should be verified and under taken with the best farming /growing management practices . A copy of our guide to planting Wesco seed for success form part of a good practice guide.

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