

Grass varieties



Types of preferred grasses

- Perennial Ryegrass
- Italian Ryegrass
- Hybrid Grasses
- Timothy



Less preferred – weed grasses



- Bents
- Meadow grasses
- Yorkshire fog

Weed grasses



These are:

- Less responsive to fertiliser
- Growing season is reduced
- Less nutritious
- Make poorer quality silage
- More competitive in low fertility or wet conditions
- More able to cope with long growing periods for silage 10 weeks +

What causes a good sward to deteriorate



- Over-grazing
- Under-grazing
- Poaching
- Excessive slurry applications
- Big, late cuts of silage
- Poor nutrition
- Poor drainage

Feeding value of grasses



Species	Water Soluble Carbohydrate
Italian ryegrass	3.6
Perennial ryegrass	3.4
Timothy	2.2
Permanent pasture	1.5

Preferred grasses

Perennial ryegrass



- Generally considered a long term grass
- Rapid establishment and withstands intensive grazing
- Responds well to Nitrogen-long growing season
- Good companion grass with clover
- Doesn't like infertile soils
- Can be sub divided into **early**, **intermediate** and **late** varieties
- Diploid and Tetraploid varieties are available

Perennial ryegrass



<i>Diploids</i>		
Early Heading date mid May	Intermediate Heading date late May	Late Heading date early June
<i>Tetraploids</i>		
Early Heading date mid May	Intermediate Heading date late May	Late Heading date early June

Tetraploids - what are they?



- Available in perennial, Italian and hybrid grasses.
- Higher sugar grasses compared to diploids
- Higher moisture levels
- Good companion to clover because of open nature
- They don't like poaching
- They can be short-lived if poorly managed
- Can be used instead of Timothy on lighter soils.
- Max amount to sow in a mix = 30%

Comparison of productive grass varieties



Grass Type	Silage yield (t/ha)	Grazing yield (t/ha)	Sward density (0-9)	Spring yield (t/ha)	First silage cut
Perennial ryegrass <i>Earlies</i>	14.5	11.9	6.4	1.9	15 - 22 May
Perennial ryegrass <i>Intermediates</i>	14.4	11.6	6.5	1.2	23 - 30 May
Perennial ryegrass <i>Lates</i>	14.7	11.5	6.8	1.0	1 - 7 June
Italian ryegrass	18.4	13	4.7	2.8	23 - 30 May
Hybrid grasses	17.9	12.6	4.8	2.6	15 - 22 May
Timothy	9.9	9.7	6.6	1.2	23 - 30 May

Choosing perennials



Cutting

- Heading date
- High silage yield
- Highly digestible
- More erect types
- clean cutting
- Doesn't run to stem
between cuttings
- Durability

Grazing

- High grazing yield
- Early spring growth
- High energy/digestible
- Out compete weed
grasses
- Good sward density
- Durability

White clover – how to Choose?



Can be sub-divided into:

- Small
- Medium
- Large
- Very large

Monitor farm- Silage analysis



	1 st Cut 01/06/09	HFIS 1st Cut Average	2nd Cut 03/08/09	HFIS 2 nd Cut Average
Dry Matter	37.4	27.7	15.7	25
pH	4.4	4.1	4.2	4.1
Ammonia	7.0	8.1	5.0	8.8
Protein	12.3	12.7	12.3	12.9
ME	11.6	10.8	11.2	10.2
D-Value	73	67	70	64

Predicted performance - 500 kg continental steer



Silage cut	Weight gain per day on silage alone	Meal required to gain 1 kg
1 st Cut Silage	0.97 kg/day	0
2 nd cut Silage	0.52 kg/day	4