cocksfoot management

One of the most persistent perennial grass species is cocksfoot. It can thrive in conditions where other grass species would struggle such as moderate to low soil fertility levels and dry conditions.

More recent use has been the inclusion of new generation cocksfoot into higher production systems as a component with perennial ryegrass or as the main grass species with compatible legumes. New generation cocksfoots such as SF Greenly ll have softer, finer leaves than the more traditional varieties whilst still maintaining tolerance to set stocking.

Managed well with appropriate companion clovers, cocksfoot can offer a good persistent alternative to other grass species.

Establishment

Cocksfoot is often sown as a component of a permanent pasture mix or as a specialist perennial pasture in conjunction with companion legumes. When used as part of a mix, cocksfoot should be sown between 2-5kg/ha depending on other grass species in the mix.

New generation cocksfoots like SF Greenly ll has less tendancy to clump and dominate pastures like older varieties. Fine leaved cocksfoots like SF Greenly ll are more compatible with other grass species so higher rates can be used.

SF Greenly ll can also be sown at higher rates (6-10kg/ha) as the sole grass component of a specialist permanent pasture.

It should be planted in conjunction with a suitable legume species. One of the best legumes to use with cocksfoot in a dryland situation is subterranean clover. This is because the growth cycles of the clover and the cocksfoot complement each other rather than competing. Other legumes can be used in higher production systems or when the new generation cocksfoot in used in conjunction with another grass.

Grazing

Cocksfoot should be kept short to help maintain its feed quality. Its nitrogen requirements are generally higher during peak production than ryegrass which is why compatible legumes must be used when planting in a mix.

For more information contact Seed Force freephone

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