



June 2014

# Reseeding - 10 steps to a successful reseed



*Reseeding is necessary to increase the overall productivity of the farm.*

## 1. Identify paddocks for reseeding

Poorer performing paddocks should be targeted. Reseeding should be carried out where perennial ryegrass is less than 40%. Perennial ryegrass swards increase the overall productivity of the farm by:

- growing more grass (2.7tDM extra when a sward of 15% perennial ryegrass was compared with a 100% ryegrass sward. Around 1.7t of this was produced before May. If this is valued at €200/t DM, as it is replacing meal and silage, it is worth €340/ha/annum. Typical reseeding costs are €750/ha, so

investment is repaid in less than three years if earlier turnout is achieved or if a higher stocking rate is carried); and,

- growing better quality grass, which is also easier to graze out.

## 2. Plan when to reseed

Spring is the best time for reseeding:

- shorter turnaround time;
- better conditions for germination;
- better conditions for post-emergence spray; and,
- better conditions for grazing after establishment.

If carrying out autumn reseeding, it should be completed by mid-August.

### 3. Soil test

Soil test for phosphorus (P), potassium (K) and lime requirements before reseeding (ideally in the autumn before planned reseeding).

### 4. Spray off paddock

Spray off the old sward. If there are perennial weeds such as docks and ragwort, use a glyphosate spray.

To ensure a quick turnaround (target is to have reseed back into production in 60 days), the old sward should be sprayed seven to 10 days before the final grazing/mowing.

A tight grazing or mowing will ensure a low level of thrash. This is particularly important for minimum cultivation techniques.

### 5. Choose appropriate method of reseeding and prepare a firm-fine seed bed

There are many different cultivation and sowing methods available for reseeding. All methods, when completed correctly, are equally effective. Surface trash needs to be minimised by spraying and tight grazing/mowing. Whichever cultivation technique is chosen, a firm-fine seedbed is required with good seed/soil contact.

### 6. Spread lime and N/P/K

Apply lime, P and K according to soil test results. Do not apply more than 3t/lime/acre in a single application. Apply 30 units nitrogen (N)/acre.

Table 1: P and K rates for reseeding.

| Index<br>(units/acre) | P application<br>(units/acre) | K application |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 1                     | 48                            | 88            |
| 2                     | 32                            | 60            |
| 3                     | 24                            | 40            |
| 4                     | 0                             | 24            |

(Also check overall fertiliser allowances in nitrates regulations.)

### 7. Choose varieties and clover, use the correct sowing rate

The key traits in a seasonal grass-based production system are:

- **high seasonal production (spring and autumn) for grazing mixes;**
- **high silage yields for silage mixes;**
- **high mid-season quality for grazing mixes; and,**
- **good ground cover or persistency score.**

Look for mixtures that have varieties with these traits (check against Department of Agriculture recommended list at <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie>).

Also, a Pasture Profit Index has been launched by Teagasc with 16 varieties initially and will be rolled out to include more varieties.

If including clover at sowing, use medium-leaf white clovers for cattle; small-leaf white clovers for sheep.

Sow at 2kg/acre. Sow mixtures at 14kg/ac of seed.

## 8. Roll after sowing

Roll to ensure seed-to-soil contact. Even if rolling isn't possible at sowing, roll before first grazing – otherwise loose plants will get pulled at grazing.

## 9. Control weeds and pests

- Weeds in new reseeded are best controlled when the grass is at the two to three leaf stage.
- Docks and chickweed are the two most critical weeds to control in reseeded.
- Where docks are the main issue, products such as Underclear, Legumex DB Undersown, DB plus, Clovex, etc., can be used. These are clover safe.
- Where both Chickweed and docks are present, use Legumes DB+ Triad where there is clover in the sward. If there isn't clover, you have the option of using Starane 2, Binder, Hurler, Reaper, etc.

Monitor for pest attack, especially in autumn (slugs, leatherjackets, frit fly and rabbits are the main threats).

## 10. Graze at a low cover (1000kg-1200kg)

- Graze the new reseed as soon as the plants do not pull out of the ground. It is especially important that autumn reseeded are grazed before the first winter.
- Apply 30 units of N three to four weeks after sowing.
- Avoid cutting the new reseed for silage in the first year, keep grazing at low covers.

*Teagasc has produced a pocket booklet on reseeding, which is available at <http://www.teagasc.ie/publications>.*



## HEALTH & SAFETY

### Farm accidents – Remembered and missed

An ecumenical service will be held on June 29, 2014 in Abbeyleix, Co. Laois at 2.00pm for those who have lost their lives or suffered serious injury in farm accidents.

The event is being organised by farmer Brian Rohan and his wife Norma. Brian tragically lost his father in a farm

accident in June 2012. It is planned to read out the names of people who have been lost through farm accidents at the service.

If you would like to attend the service, or have your loved one's name read out, you can obtain further information at <http://www.embracefarm.com/>.



## RESEARCH UPDATE

## Finishing suckler-bred steers prior to a second indoor winter period

E.G. O’Riordan, D. Marren, K. McMenamin, M. McGee and A.P. Moloney, Teagasc, Grange.

Early finishing of spring-born suckled steers, at 18-20 months of age, off pasture in autumn, may offer the possibility of reducing costs of production by eliminating the final housing period. As the majority of suckler steers are late-maturing, achieving an adequate carcass fat cover at a younger age may be challenging. Late and early-maturing breeds differ in fatness at a constant age or weight and therefore, potentially in suitability for finishing systems that differ in intensity. A study was undertaken at Grange to determine growth and carcass characteristics of early and late-maturing steers produced on three contrasting production systems, with slaughter prior to the second wintering period. Spring-born Aberdeen Angus and Hereford (early maturing (EM)), and Charolais and Limousin (late maturing (LM)) sired weanling steers from the suckler herd were used. All animals had a common first winter indoors (store period), after which they were allocated to either: (1) 175 days grazed pasture only; (2) 100 days grazed pasture, followed by 75 days at pasture supplemented with 5kg (fresh weight) concentrate daily; and, (3) 100 days grazed pasture followed by 75 days indoors on *ad libitum* concentrate. At pasture, each group of animals were rotationally grazed on

six paddocks. Animals were slaughtered at the end of the 175-day study (ca. 19 months age). When slaughtered directly off grass, un-supplemented EM had a carcass weight of 282kg and a fat score of 3-, whereas LM had a carcass weight of 300kg and fat score of 2=. Supplementing EM at pasture increased carcass weight by 27kg (~14kg concentrates/kg carcass gain response) and fat score to 3=, whereas supplementing LM increased carcass weight by 38kg (~10:1 response) and fat score to 3-. Feeding *ad libitum* concentrates indoors for the last 75 days (finishing period) increased carcass weight by 49kg for EM (~17:1 response) and fat score to 3+/4-, and by 63kg for LM (~13:1 response) and fat score to 3=. During the final 75-day finishing period, LM had a significantly higher average daily live weight gain than EM. When compared at a similar slaughter age, LM had a significantly higher slaughter weight, kill-out proportion, carcass weight, and carcass conformation score, and lower carcass fat score than EM. Increasing concentrate levels in the final 75 days significantly increased all of these carcass traits as well. Overall, EM were lighter and fatter and had poorer carcass conformation, plus a lower response to concentrate supplementation than LM.

Remember: the place to be on Wednesday, June 18 is in Teagasc Grange for our major beef open day “Beef 2014 – The Business of Cattle”.

For further information on any issues raised in this newsletter, or to access other enterprise newsletters, please contact your local Teagasc adviser or see [www.teagasc.ie](http://www.teagasc.ie).