

Cocksfoot

Introduction

Cocksfoot is a very persistent perennial grass that tolerates summer dry conditions, moderate soil fertility, insect attack and continual set stocking.

Cocksfoot is used to enhance the growth and persistence of permanent pasture in summer dry areas. It also adds variety to the stock diet.

Traditionally seeding rates of cocksfoot were kept low in a mix, because cocksfoot can dominate pastures, reducing clover levels and digestibility. New fine leaved cocksfoot are much more compatible with ryegrass, giving better long term pastures.

It is moderately slow to establish and has lower digestibility than most other grasses. Cocksfoot has limited winter growth but good summer growth.

Management tips

Sowing rate

Cocksfoot is most commonly sown at 2-3 kg/ha as a component of a ryegrass based seed mix. It can be sown at a higher rate of 5-8 kg/ha as a specialist pasture, in particularly dry conditions where other grasses struggle to persist.

Ella gives a new option, as a fine leaved cocksfoot that doesn't dominate pastures. It can be used over a wide range of situations, including better soil types.

Grazing management

Cocksfoot should be kept short and leafy through the spring to maintain feed value. If traditional cocksfoots become clumpy or stemmy they are unpalatable to stock.

In animal trials, where cocksfoot has been kept short and leafy, animal performance is reasonably good.

Fertiliser

Cocksfoot responds well to nitrogen fertiliser, generally at higher response rates than ryegrass.