

Managing new pasture

Summary

- Good management gets the best out of a new pasture.

First grazing

The most critical grazing is the first one. New pasture should be grazed as soon as the grass plants do not pull out of the ground. This promotes grass tillering and growth. Delaying the first grazing slows establishment and can reduce yield by up to 1 t DM/ha. Early grazing also benefits clover, allowing light to reach it. Clover is slower establishing than ryegrass, so plants are usually smaller, in the base of the pasture, and susceptible to shading.

After sowing

First 6 - 10 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Graze lightly in dry conditions, if possible using young stock, as soon as ryegrass plants don't pull out. Aim to remove the top 2-3 cm of plants ■ Apply small amounts of nitrogen (e.g. 25 kg N/ha) if growth is slow.
Second grazing onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New pastures grow rapidly and need frequent grazing to be kept leafy. ■ Keep pastures relatively short as this helps ryegrass to tiller and stops shading of clover. ■ Do not make heavy hay or silage crops in the first season as this will shade clovers.
In summer dry areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be gentle on new pasture in dry conditions. ■ If dry, don't graze them too hard.

Weed control

Weeds can be a problem and should be controlled to ensure successful establishment of new pasture species. If clovers are present use herbicides such as *MCPB*, *Preside* or *Pulsar*. Different spraying options need to be investigated if herbs, like chicory and plantain, are in the pasture mix.



The pluck test - if seedlings don't pull out it is ready to graze.