

One Year Leys

Fast & Vast One Year Ley

Ref. MIXFV

This short term ley is for those wishing to produce a large amount of forage in a very short time. This type of ley has been used on farms in Europe for many years. We introduced it here three years ago and overall the results have been encouraging. Yields are high, especially on rich, moist soils and the majority of crops are made into silage. On light soils in dry districts autumn sowings should be made in preference to spring sowings as well established plants will make better growth in dry seasons.

The mixture can be sown from March until August and will provide grazing or a massive cut of silage after 10 weeks. There will also be regrowth which provides a second cut or grazing. The ley can be left down over the winter as a cover or to hold stock. The forage is high in protein and is a well balanced feed due to the ryegrass content.

In addition to red clover the mixture also contains crimson clover and vetches which lift yield over a short period of time. The mixture can be relied upon for one full year of production or left down for a second year. The vetch seed is larger than the others, hence the higher inclusion rate. (The vetch can be supplied separately if required. Drilling vetches at 1" is preferred. Otherwise drill together.)

4.50 kg certified ADIN Italian ryegrass
4.50 kg certified FABIO tet. Italian ryegrass
2.00 kg certified MILVUS or GLOBAL red clover
1.00 kg certified CONTEA crimson clover
10.00 kg certified EARLY ENGLISH vetch

22.00 kg per acre £45.97 (55 kg/ha £114.93)

Quick Bulk One Year Ley

Ref. MIXQB

A very fast growing ley which can be sown in the spring or autumn and is primarily grown to produce silage. However, it can be grazed and the crop can provide for early turnout when sown in the autumn. Spring sowings on fertile soils with adequate moisture perform well but expectations should be lowered on drought prone land.

7.00 kg certified LIFLORIA or ANDREA westerwolds ryegrass
7.00 kg certified MENDOZA westerwolds ryegrass

14.00 kg per acre £27.44 (35 kg/ha £68.60)

One Year Leys

There are some situations where a high output, short term ley is required. This can be as a result of a failed crop or where an unforeseen demand for silage or grazing arises.

The choice on these pages is between a ryegrass and clover ley or just ryegrass. The clover based mixture below contains around 3% more protein and is less dependant on high nitrogen inputs.

Use

Westerwolds is the highest yielding ryegrass and is capable of extremely fast growth. For this reason it is grown largely for silage production. However, it can also be grazed and is good for early turnout or zero grazing. It is an annual and needs cutting frequently to keep growth leafy. When sown in the spring it can produce 3-4 cuts of silage. After only 12 weeks from sowing, westerwolds is usually ready for cutting. To achieve this from a spring sowing the crop needs an adequate supply of soil moisture and a source of nitrogen.

Yields

Over a shorter time period westerwolds will outyield Italian ryegrass. The best results come from crops which receive 100 kgs N per hectare for the first cut and additional N applied for subsequent cuts. Early cuts just prior to heading will give high D-values and good regrowth.

Variety

Nutritionally the varieties Lifloria and Mendoza are similar to Italian ryegrass. Prior to the introduction of Lifloria the image of westerwolds was at best, poor. It was perceived to be of low quality and to lack winter hardiness. That situation has changed and westerwolds is now grown continuously on many farms.

Field Choice

Growers should be aware of particularly early spring growth. This is likely to be of benefit, or concern, when sown in the autumn. In lowland situations westerwolds will be ready for grazing in early March. It is therefore ideal for free draining soils, but careful consideration must be given to heavy or badly drained ground.

Sowing & Establishment

Sow either in spring, usually March onwards, or by early October. The seed can be drilled to a depth of 10mm or broadcast and lightly incorporated into a fine and firm seedbed. Rolling is beneficial and usually leads to faster germination. If sowing in the autumn ensure any excess growth is removed by cutting or grazing prior to the onset of winter.

Winter Hardiness

We have been using the westerwolds varieties, Lifloria and Mendoza for many years and have not experienced problems with winter hardiness. This is not to say that we can guarantee it, but given the acreage sown we have confidence in autumn sowing.

A Quick Fix with Clover?

Fast growing legumes such as red clover, vetches and crimson clover can fix large amounts of free nitrogen into the soil. However, legumes only do this once they are reasonably established, fixing little during the first six weeks. Therefore, it can be beneficial to apply 25 kg/N per hectare to quicken establishment. This is particularly worthwhile with short duration crops.