



Quick winter feed

Quick winter feed options are available to help maximise the value and return from your pasture system, and minimise the requirement for purchased fodder to support stock through the winter season.

- Reduce requirement for purchased hay or grain
- Increase farm livestock carrying capacity and production
- Improve production from winter dormant pasture systems
- Add value to summer cropping systems

Background

Increasing your farm pasture production through winter is important, more so after a dry or wet summer/ autumn. Winter pasture production provides farmers more control to maintain or increase livestock growth rates or milk production, sell livestock in periods of higher prices per head or meet market demand and take advantage of increased winter milk pricing.

When to sow quick winter pastures can vary from year to year. The importance of understanding the livestock requirements to match expected weather conditions and pasture growth periods all need to be considered.

To assist you get the best value from your pasture and the feed when you need it, we have developed the Decision Tree for Quick Winter Feed (below) this provides product suggestions to assist with delivery of outcomes you are looking for.

Decision tree for quick winter feed



Plants of choice

Ryecorn

PGG Wrightson Seeds' Southern Green ryecorn is consistently most successful when sown mid or late season. If the break hasn't arrived by mid April and feed is desperately short, it is by far the quickest option to deliver quick winter feed.

It will perform well in poor soils and during droughts. However, its growth rate is in part, due to its lack of a winter cold requirement and after two or three grazings it will send up a seedhead and quality will decline rapidly.

Early grazing will delay bolting and enable 3 grazings but if left until it's 30 to 40cm and grazed hard by cattle, recovery will be very poor.

Southern Green ryecorn can be sown with ryegrass to extend feed supply and quality into spring, but in drought years this will reduce yields.

Annual and Italian ryegrass

Annual and Italian ryegrasses are good options if an early break occurs. They have quality advantages over cereals and can extend the supply of quality feed into summer, however if quick winter feed is the priority and the break is slow, they are not as good as cereals.

Oats

Oats remain an excellent option for later sowing. While they don't have the speed of ryecorn they do last longer and can provide useful hay or silage. If sowing three or four paddocks, an option may be to sow one paddock of ryecorn for the first grazing and 3 paddocks of oats.

Brassica

Brassicas perform very well, but only if sown early. PGG Wrightson Seeds Appin leafy turnip is consistently the quickest brassica but it does not have a winter cold requirement and consequently bolts to seed after two or three grazings. Nevertheless, if feed is critically short and an early break occurs it is a good option.

Rapes will last an extra grazing or two but will also have to be re-sown in spring unless sown with an Italian ryegrass which can extend growth into the spring/summer.

Learning

For more information on Quick Winter Feed, the following is available from the Learning Section under farming systems/Quick Winter Feed at pggwrightsonseeds.com.au

Research Paper

What to sow for Quick Winter Feed

LETS GROW TOGETHER

Planning your forage and seed requirements in advance can make a big difference to your productivity. For over 75 years PGG Wrightson Seeds have been working with farmers to get the balance right.

To discuss your plans call your Sales Agronomist now on 1800 619 910 or visit pggwrightsonseeds.com.au.