

## Grassland Weed Control



Grassland weeds can have a serious impact on grass production performance in terms of yield and quality. The most common weeds are Docks, Thistles, Nettles and Dandelions. With current expansion on dairy farms it is vital to get the most out of every hectare of land. In some cases, reseeding may be the only option if the percentage of productive grass in the sward is very low. One of the main causes of weeds is open swards, especially in 2-3 cut silage

ground or grazing ground which has been poached.

### Impact of Grassland weeds

- Reduced grass yield and forage quality
  - 10% weed infestation reduces grass yield by 10%
  - Reduced stocking rates and winter forage
- Noxious weeds are dangerous to livestock
- Cosmetic

Docks are the main weed problem in grass. They are a perennial plant, which can produce 40 – 80 thousand seeds per year. The seeds can last in the soil for up to 80 years. They are small, hardy and only need a small amount of light to germinate. This means they are very persistent in the soil. Research has shown that dock seeds are not viable when preserved in silage (due to low pH). However they do have a high requirement for Potassium, this is why they appear to be more prominent in fields which receive a lot of slurry.

Docks are best controlled when actively growing at the rosette stage (the size of a dinner plate). Docks have a large root so they need to be treated with a herbicide which is highly systemic to achieve long term control. After spraying a dense grass sward most dock regrowth is from old roots that were not fully killed. Forefront T offers the best long term broad spectrum weed control in grazing ground, as it has the best translocation down into the roots. In silage ground, Doxstar Pro or Pastor Pro, applied 3 to 4 weeks before cutting is the best option. Clover safe products are less effective for long term dock control. In reseeds, the best long term control is achieved by spraying when Docks are at the seedling stage, 6 weeks after sowing.

**There are different spray programmes available depending on your grassland issue or weed problem.**

## Dock control on farm of Liam & Tommy Connors

Father and son team, Liam and Tommy Connors from Leamybrien, Co. Waterford have a spring calving dairy herd. Liam and Tommy put a big emphasis on grassland management in conjunction with a sensible feeding regime and try to maximise quality grass in the diet. In order to maximise their grass production and utilisation they are trying to eliminate weeds, especially docks from their grazing paddocks. After a farm visit from Michael Foley (Ruminant Support Specialist) and Seamus Whitty (Sales Representative), it was decided that Liam and Tommy would spray Forefront T on a problematic paddock that was heavily infested with docks over a number of years. After spraying the docks at the rosette stage with Forefront T at the recommended rate they could clearly see the benefits of the product.

According to Liam "I would highly recommend the product as it killed the docks off completely. It did not negatively impact the grass growth at the time of spraying and has increased the overall grass grown in the paddock".

Weed control is vitally important to them especially in a grass based system as Liam and Tommy look to expand their dairy enterprise in the future.



**Please contact your local Bretts Sales Representative for more information.**

## Soil Testing

As we come into autumn, now is the time to plan soil testing. Soil testing is an invaluable tool that helps you accurately measure and manage the pH and nutrient status of your soils. All plants require a combination of major, secondary and micro-nutrients to reach their potential. Brett Brothers carry out a full range of standard soil tests through Lancrop Laboratories and precision farming soil nutrient maps through Soyl.

## Harvest Update



## Sustainable Use Directive (SUD) Register

All users of pesticides on tillage or grassland farms must register with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) by November 26th, 2015. You can register on the **DAFM website** at: <http://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/sudreg/>. Professional users must have completed an approved pesticide course before registering.



Harvest 2015 is well underway with winter barley almost complete and good yields being reported. Quality is also good with average moisture 19% and KPH 66. Winter Oats and Oil Seed Rape are just starting. We would like to wish everybody a good and safe harvest.

Brett Brothers Ltd.,  
Windgap,  
Co. Kilkenny  
Tel: 051-648204

Brett Brothers Ltd.,  
Callan,  
Co. Kilkenny  
Tel: 056-7755300

Brett Brothers Ltd.,  
Ardfinnan,  
Co. Tipperary  
Tel: 052-7466208

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