

GRASSLAND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE CANOLFAN DATBLYGU TIR GLAS

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214.01 Chicory for Lamb Finishing

The chicory best used for lamb finishing is a *perennial* tap-rooted herb, it is high yielding, has good nutritional quality, gives higher growth rates in lambs than perennial ryegrass, and can reduce winter feed costs. It complements grass as a low cost, home grown forage which extends the grazing season. On mixed farms, in organic or low input systems, chicory is a beneficial break in the crop rotation. It has a high mineral status and its anthelmintic properties can help worm control.

Sowing and Establishment

Choose a recognised variety of perennial Chicory bred as a forage crop, e.g. Puna II. Avoid annual species.

Chicory as a drought tolerant crop is suited to dry ground – reducing the risk of the crop becoming muddy and unpalatable in wet periods.

Sow between May and June.

Drill or broadcast into a firm seedbed to 10mm. If direct drilling -do not sow deeper than 10mm.

Sowing rate:

Pure stands at 2 kg /acre.

Mixtures with perennial ryegrass, white clover and herbs use 0.5kg/acre.

Ensure soil P and K indexes 2 and pH 6.

Slug pellets may improve establishment.

Chicory is responsive to N fertiliser.

Apply 45kg N/ha at the start of spring with applications of N after grazing.

Or sow with a medium or large leaf white clover (2 kg /acre) to provide N

Utilisation

Once established, the crop can be grazed from about 8 weeks.

To minimize wastage, graze hard, strip graze with an electric fence or rotationally graze in paddocks.

Introduce lambs to the crop when its 25-30cm tall. Stock at a rate to take the crop down quickly to 5cm. Rotate or back fence to allow re-growth. Rotation length should be 3 to 6 weeks.

Continuous grazing or strip grazing, without a back fence, will reduce animal performance and crop quality.

Mature crops above 30cm are less palatable and poorer quality.

In its first year chicory will rarely flower – in subsequent years control flowering by tight grazing or topping.

Grazing during winter should be light to avoid damaging the plants crown.

Graze accumulated growth before winter down to 5cm.

A good crop of chicory should support 20 lambs/acre for between 30 and 40 days.

From the high nutritional value expect lamb growth rates of over 250 grammes/day.

The ash value indicates the high mineral status.

Typical nutritional analysis of pure chicory

Dry Matter	Crude Protein	Digestibility	Oil (Acid Hydrolysed)	Ash	ME
8%	25.4%	66.1%	4.6%	15.2%	10.4