

GRASSLAND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE CANOLFAN DATBLYGU TIR GLAS

Sefydliad Gwyddorau Biolegol, Amgylcheddol a Gwledig

Canolfan Datblygu Tir Glas, Gogerddan
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3EB
Ffôn: (01970) 823000/Ffacs: (01970) 828357
E-bost: hym@aber.ac.uk

Institute of Biological, Environmental & Rural Sciences

Grassland Development Centre, Gogerddan
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3EB
Tel: (01970) 823000/Fax: (01970) 828357
Email: hym@aber.ac.uk

215.02

RED CLOVER

Why grow red clover?

- High yielding silage crop – 13t DM/ha/annum equivalent to Italian/hybrid ryegrass with 250 units of N/acre.
- Affordable and traceable home-grown protein (14-19% crude protein).
- Proven to increase animal performance – milk and meat.
- Good for improving soil structure.

Why it has become more popular?

- Increased price of nitrogen fertiliser on conventional farms.
- Good yields on organic farms.
- Improved varieties with a new breeding programme started in 1998.

For good establishment

- Sow mid-July to end August.
- Fine, firm, level seedbed.
- No N, moderate P and K.
- Need correct soil indexes (pH 6, P & K 2).
- Can direct drill 1.5cm deep or broadcast, oversow into existing sward or undersow in the spring to a cereal crop.

Optimising productivity

- Fit it into a rotation to ensure a gap of 5-8 years between crops.
- Anticipate 3 years productive sward.
- Silage-wilt to 25-30% but avoid handling as prone to leaf shatter.
- Ensilage in a clamp or bale.
- Inoculant recommended as crop has high buffering capacity and low sugars.
- Graze with care to protect crown – it does not tolerate poaching or hard sheep grazing.
- Minimise bloat risk if grazing by sensible precautions.
- Avoid grazing ewes and rams 6 weeks before, during and after tupping.

