

When should I oversow and when should I do a complete re-seed?

A large percentage of Beef and Sheep farmers will put in a long term permanent pasture ley when re-seeding and be looking for upwards of 10 years of production from it. The ley, well managed will remain productive for 10 years but during that time will gradually suffer the ingress of weeds and weed grasses with much lower digestibility, feed value and response to nitrogen. So when do I plough it up? Generally speaking, a complete re-seed would be advisable once the percentage of sown species originally sown drops below 25%- this means that you walk the ley and evaluate how much ryegrass is still present- know your grasses and more importantly; be able to identify ryegrass amongst other grasses like the fescues, meadow grasses, Yorkshire fogs, cocksfoots etc! Oversowing on the other hand, would be advisable in order to boost production once the percentage of ryegrass drops much below 70%. White or Red clover can be oversown at any time when a need for improved quality forage (increased crude protein) and the ability to fix nitrogen and supply it to the sward is identified.

When is the best time to oversow?

Spring – there is plenty of moisture in the soil and a long growing season ahead. This will not be an ideal time if there is high pressure on early season grazing. Low soil temperatures can mean slow establishment and it then can be difficult to keep on top of competing grass during peak growing times

After silage – swards are open and require less harrowing to create the right conditions. The risk of prolonged dry conditions is less after later cuts (July/August). This is often the best timing. Clover seed needs to be sown by early August

Use renovation techniques strategically to correct swards before you lose production:

If weather conditions force a long, late silage cut – introduce some seed as tiller densities will be low and aftermath recovery will be slow.

If a wet spring has meant stock damaging ground – renovate as soon as possible, rather than allowing weeds and weed grasses to move in and fill the gaps

**Sefydliad Gwyddorau Biolegol, Amglycheddol a Gwledig
Institute of Biological, Environmental & Rural Sciences**

Canolfan Datblygu Tir Glas, Prifysgol Aberystwyth
Grassland Development Centre, Aberystwyth University,
Gogerddan, Ceredigion, SY23 3EB

Ffôn / Tel: (01970) 823026 / 823028
Ffacs: (01970) 828357