



Establishing pastures - Readers' Note

This document is part of a larger publication. The remaining parts and full version of the publication can be found at:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/dairy-cattle/feed/publications/establishing-pastures>

Updated versions of this document can also be found at the above web address.

This document is subject to the disclaimers and copyright of the full version from which it is extracted. These disclaimers and copyright statements are available in the appropriate document at the above web address.

Prime pasture check ✓

This 8-step checklist is reproduced from the *Pasture Establishment Field Guide* with the kind permission of Mike Keys, Queanbeyan, and the NSW Agriculture Prime Pasture team. The field guide is available from NSW Agriculture offices. The checklist is included here as a quick reminder of the important points to cover in establishing productive pastures.

Times and other details will vary for spring and autumn sowings and with regions. For more details, see the full field guide, read this manual or speak to an agronomist.

Be certain each step is completed before going to the next step. Steps 4, 5 and 6 are essential. All are important.

1. Assess, select and plan early

Key check: Assess existing pasture, weeds and soil fertility.

- Select the paddock—question reason for sowing, potential use, correct species.
- Budget check—assess costs and returns.
- Sowing method—check availability and suitability of equipment.

2. Year-before weed and pest control

- Calibrate boom spray.
- Broadleaf weeds—spray or spray-graze, autumn, spring or both.

Key check: Graze well through winter and spring.

Target: Keep pasture 25 mm tall

- Annual grass weeds—either pasture-top + miticide or spring fodder crop (less relevant on coast).

3. Presowing grazing or cultivation

Key check: Graze well over summer—utilise feed.

- Conventional sowings—summer fallow and weed control.
- Direct-drill sowings—graze well after autumn break.

4. Absolute weed and pest control

Key check: Allow full weed germination after the autumn break. Graze well to keep weeds small.

- Assess weed and pest levels, including wet areas for slugs.
- Spray or spray-graze problem weeds first (sorrel, dock, thistles).
- Coast—treat seed for seed-harvesting ants.
- **Either** use appropriate chemicals and label rates **or** cultivate to achieve a firm, fine, weedfree seedbed.

5. Adequate soil moisture

- Don't sow on the first rain in autumn.

Key check: 50–100 mm total rain after the autumn break.

Target: Moisture down to 200mm; moist surface.

- Use nitrogen-fortified fertilisers for direct-drill sowings.

6. Accurate seed placement

Key check: 5% of seed and fertiliser still visible.

Target: Tilt over the seed no more than 5mm. Use inverted 'T' (⊥) sowing points.

- Direct-drill—average furrow depth 25mm but furrow open. Use no harrows or roller.

7. Monitor weeds and pests

Key check: Look for pests and weed seedlings at 10–14 days.

- Re-examine weekly. Treat early!

8. Grazing

Key check: Plants 100mm tall, well anchored; soil moist.

- Graze heavily but quickly down to 25mm. **Then spell.**
- Allow grasses to seed in the first summer.

