



Establishing pastures - Readers' Note

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Weed control at sowing

For a complete listing of herbicides for weed control in lucerne, see the NSW Agriculture publication *Weed Control in Lucerne and Pastures*, which is included in this manual.

Sowing into existing good pasture

It is possible to add ryegrass and clover to an existing pasture by direct-drilling or mulch planting without the need to spray or kill the existing pasture. This technique is useful if the pasture is legume-dominated or too good to kill. The aim is to thicken up the pasture or to add a grass to legume-dominated pastures. The technique is suitable only for annual and perennial ryegrass, lotus, white clover and subclover; it will not work with phalaris, cocksfoot, fescue or lucerne.

To use this technique there should be no more than 50% ground cover. Graze the paddock as hard as possible immediately before broadcasting or direct-drilling the ryegrass and clover seed into a moist soil. Then slash or mulch as close to the soil surface as possible without damaging the existing pasture (1–2 cm).

Slash mulch-planted kikuyu or paspalum pastures as short as possible after broadcasting or direct-drilling—even to the soil surface. Delay sowing winter-growing pastures into these pastures until active growth has stopped (for example, on the South Coast after late March) to avoid seedlings being swamped by summer-growing species. Earlier sowings will be swamped by summer-growing species.

Using herbicides to kill at sowing before direct-drilling or mulch planting

Where the existing pasture is poor, weedy or not wanted, the pasture can be killed with glyphosate (for example, Roundup®) at or before sowing. This technique is often used on kikuyu, paspalum, carpet grass, tussock grass and annual summer grasses.

After heavy pre-grazing or slashing, allow the summer-growing grasses to regrow 5–7 cm and then apply glyphosate. Plants must be actively growing for this to work.

Where poa tussock grass or bergalia tussock is present, graze heavily and then apply glyphosate at or immediately before sowing. Direct-drill or broadcast pasture seeds immediately after spraying.

Rate of glyphosate product (L/ha) to control various plants

Species	Rate of glyphosate product (L/ha)
Tussock grass (<i>Poa sieberiana</i>)	3
Bergalia tussock (<i>Carex longibrachiata</i>)	4
Paspalum	3
Kikuyu	3–6
Annual summer grasses	1.5–3
Couch grass	9

See also the NSW Agriculture publication *Weed Control in Lucerne and Pastures*.

Reducing competition but not killing existing perennial pastures

When direct-drilling or mulch planting into an existing perennial pasture, you can reduce competition by using herbicides at sowing. The two most used are low rates of glyphosate in kikuyu and paspalum, and paraquat + diquat (for example, Spray-Seed®) in temperate pastures and summer-growing perennials.

In paspalum, following heavy grazing use 2L/ha paraquat + diquat. Early direct drilling into kikuyu or paspalum before early April requires the use of herbicides to reduce competition and to allow successful pasture establishment.

In temperate perennial pastures, paraquat + diquat can be used to kill annual grass weeds, broadleaved weeds and competition from existing perennial pastures. Apply 1–2L/ha and direct-drill immediately.