



Lucerne

Lucerne is a highly nutritious forage for livestock. It combines good digestibility with high proteins providing excellent milk yields or daily live weight gains. A more mature hay crop would be more suitable for feeding young stock.

Benefits:

- High protein (18 – 22%) and easily digestible fibre that is rich in minerals.
- A perennial species which can persist up to 5 years where well managed.
- Flexible enough to be cut or grazed.
- Will 'fix' up to 200kg N/ha/annum
- Under silage, annual yields of 12t DM/ha at 30% DM should be targeted.
- Dairy Cow grazing trials have shown milk yields increases of >1.5kg/day grazing Lucerne compared to grass alone.
- Sheep grazing trials have shown DLWG of 300-500g/day.
- Deep taproot gives excellent drought tolerance.

Utilisation:

- Performs well in free draining, drier environments due to tap roots
- Requires a pH of 6.0 or higher and high levels of P and K, particularly at establishment.
- A crop will remove 8Kg P and 30Kg K per tonne of DM.
- Management is key! A firm, clean seedbed to establish then careful management to get maximum persistency: leave a 10cm stubble when cutting and graze no lower than 7cm.
- To utilise Lucerne, allow a minimum of 50% flowering (50% of the tallest stems have a flower) prior to the first grazing/cutting. If the stand is weedy at establishment it can be grazed/cut ONCE if it is 15-20cm tall and then left to flower a minimum of 50%
- Bloat can be an issue when grazing, introduce the crop slowly over 3 weeks always ensuring a fibre source (hay/straw) is available.

Sowing rate: 8-10kg/acre. Drill at 5-12mm deep on normal soils or up to 25mm on light sandy soils.

Available in pack sizes of 25kg.

Article supplied by Mhairi Dawson, R & D Manager Barenbrug UK Ltd