

PASTURE CONDITION

It's time to condition score your pastures just like you do for your stock.

Condition scoring every paddock on the farm will help determine your under-performing paddocks and identify those which may need to be renewed.

The tool below is an example to rank every paddock on the farm from best to worst. Then look at underlying reasons for poor performance, and make the best decisions on actions to restore these paddocks back to full production.

Paddocks are scored from 5 (best) to 1 (worst) using the photos and descriptions below to make accurate decisions.

It's designed to assist with plans for short, medium and long-term pasture renovation and renewal strategies, depending on the farm system and feed requirements.

NOTE: This ranking is **indicative only** and may need to be modified for your farm location. Weed content is a vital aspect to inspect as weed species vary between regions and farms.

Key recommendation – choose the best performing cultivar and endophyte for your locality to ensure longevity of pastures and sow treated seed for proven results.

5



Description

Whole paddock has dense sward of desired grasses and clovers

Suggested Action

No action required. Would be happy if whole farm in this state

4



Description

Parts of the paddock show signs of low level damage, less vigorous grasses and some weeds

Suggested Action

Check fertility. Apply summer N to encourage tillering. Paddock probably OK for coming season

3



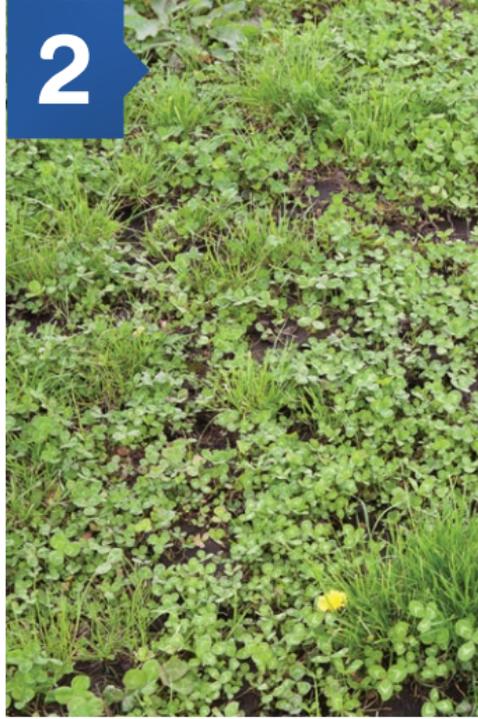
Description

Majority of paddock has low level damage, weeds, and less vigorous grasses

Suggested Action

Apply summer N. Undersow in the autumn with perennial ryegrass containing appropriate endophyte

2



Description

Parts of the paddock have severe damage, a lot of weeds and bare ground

Suggested Action

Either

- Sow in perennial ryegrass in autumn, or:
- Undersow with Italian ryegrass in autumn and plan to renew in following 6-12 months, or:
- In spring oversow chicory with fertiliser, or undersow paddocks with chicory, and plan to renew in 6-18 months.

1



Description

Entire paddock severely damaged

Suggested Action

Sow into summer crop in spring, and plan to sow in perennial pasture in the autumn

10 TOP TIPS

for Pasture Renewal Success

1

Plan the process well in advance – 6 months is ideal.

If you use a contractor decide on your renewal timing book in early. In autumn sow perennial ryegrass in late March in North Island or by mid March in South Island to ensure pasture (esp clover) establishes well before winter. This helps your pasture's long term performance.

2

Identify the paddocks that are under-performing.

You'll know instinctively which ones they are. The Pasture Condition photos (overleaf) will assist you.

3

Look for underlying reasons of poor pasture production.

eg. poor drainage, low soil fertility etc. Fix these or you will end up with the same result.

4

Soil test (at least 6 months in advance)

Correct any soil nutrient deficiencies.

5

Decide if you want to grow a forage crop prior to pasture renewal.

Then determine if you want to renew in autumn or spring.

6

Decide on the renewal method you will use – direct drilling, minimum tillage or cultivation.

If you cultivate, prepare a good seed bed (firm, fine & level)

7

Spray out the paddock prior to any direct drilling or cultivation work.

Consider a double spray application if you direct drilling. Check for pests eg. grass grub, slugs, black beetle, Argentine stem weevil – and take advice to remedy problems.

8

Choose the correct cultivar, endophyte, seed mix and treatment for your farming system to maximise persistence.

Take advice from your trusted seed rep.

9

Decide on best sowing rate and order seed mixed in advance.

Check seed certificate for germination, purity and endophyte.

10

After drilling, do not ignore your paddock.

Monitor progress weekly at least. Control slugs and weeds if necessary.

ONGOING TREATMENT

Treat your new grass like a baby – graze early at about 9-10cm high to promote tillering (use the pluck test to determine when pasture is ready to graze). Sheep or calves are best for the first grazing. Apply nitrogen after the first grazing.

Avoid over grazing or pugging new pasture.

Ask for advice from experts if you wish to get the best return from your pasture renewal investment.