

Irwin Hunter & Co.

Western Australia's Leading Seed Distributor

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Supermix, successful for grazing and hay.

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The Busselton farmers have just started building a new 60-stand rotary dairy and are increasing their milking herd from 350 to 500 cows.

They have selected a pre-mixed selection of annual ryegrasses called Supermix as the base of their expanding business.

Supermix is made up of equal measures of diploid ryegrasses, Dargo, Progrow and Surrey and the tetraploid ryegrass, V34N.

Mr Brand, with his son Christopher, have used the mixture for two years.



Mr Brand said it was extremely convenient to buy pre-mixed seed.

"It is so difficult to mix seed properly yourself," Mr Brand said.

"But when you buy from Irwin Hunter & Co, you know that when Irwin says it is mixed at a certain rate, it is.

"You also know that the seed will enter the ground side by side because it has been perfectly mixed."

The Brands also appreciate the mix because it has been developed specifically for dairy farmers in the South-West of WA.

"Irwin Hunter does the hard work. He trials the rate of seeding, the rate for fertiliser application and works out how to grow it for the best results in this area."

But it is not just the convenience of the pre-mixed seed and the suitability of the mix for the environment that the Brands like about the mixture of annual pasture. They are impressed with both the quality and quantity of feed the pasture provides.

"To be honest, we aim for quantity of hay, and not necessarily quality. We believe our hay quality is important, but we aim for quantity."

"Supermix gives us both quality and quantity."

"With deregulation we have to produce more milk to stay viable. Part of increasing more milk is getting the breeding right and grass is a tool to breeding," Mr Brand said.

The secret to the success of the pasture is using the right amount of fertiliser, he said.

"All these new ryegrasses will not perform without the right fertiliser at the right time."

The Brands spread Summit Dairy fertiliser with a multi-spreader at 200kg/ha within a week of breaking rains. They follow up with 50 to 60kg of urea per hectare a few weeks later and then spread the whole farm with 150 to 200kg/ha of Summit Hay when the paddocks are ready for shutting up in late August or early September.

The family intend to increase fertilising from three times a year to five times when the extra 150 milking cows are let loose on the pastures.

At sowing time, the Brands direct drill the Supermix using a Duncan Enviro-Drill Triple Disc. During the past two years they have sown Gosse subclover at 8kg/ha together with the Supermix, which is sown at about 20kg/ha. The Brands intend to trial a new clover, Persian Turbo, this season instead of the Gosse.

The Brands usually dry seed if they haven't had breaking rains by the end of April. Seeding dry gives them a time advantage so that by the time it does rain they have already sown much of their 575 acres of home farm and 700 acres of leased run-off block to pasture.

The Brands sowed more than four tonnes of Supermix last year at around 20kg/ha.

The cows had their first graze of the new pasture six to eight weeks after seeding. After the first graze the Brands commence a 30-day grazing rotation. The cows usually get their first graze in early June, followed by a graze in July and August. Some of the paddocks are shut up for hay or silage on the first of September and are cut after six to eight weeks depending on the weather.

The Brands cut most of their hay and silage from their leased block. Last year 70 acres of the block that were sown to the clover/Supermix pasture mix yielded a hefty 507 round bales.

"We are more than happy with the Supermix pasture. You know the saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it", that's my attitude to Supermix. It performs extremely well and we'll be using it again this year and in the future."