

Irwin Hunter & Co.

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Roper, supports high stock numbers.

Rotational grazing systems working well at
Kojonup.

Rob and Jennifer Warburton established a new pasture benchmark on their Kojonup property last season.

The couple sowed Roper perennial ryegrass, Phalaris and Crimson clover to a paddock that had been in crop for the previous six years.

A gravelly and sandy loam, Rob said the paddock normally produced a good crop and had good levels of sub clover before it was sown to crop.

"The ryegrass pasture was fertilised with 50 litre's/ha of Flexi N twice in spring, with three weeks between applications and then twice in winter and produced a phenomenal amount of feed," he said.

"For the first time since 1997 it looked like feed was getting away from us and we had to strip graze.

"We run our 6000 Merino ewes and 4000 dry sheep in mobs of up to 3000 head and moved them as often as every four days, depending on the size of the mob and the paddock area."

An application of Flexi N in October and late spring rains saw the perennial ryegrass-based pasture remain green until late November, long after Wimmera had senesced.

Rob swathed the ryegrass pasture prior to Christmas and then harvested the seed in the new year.



Chris Robinson and Rob Warburton

Flexi N has proved a real bonus because of its ease of application and flexibility and Rob used more of the liquid fertilizer on his pasture than the crops last year.

He uses insecticide against RLEM, cut worm and aphids on his pastures and was able to spray the chemical with Flexi N.

Aware now of the production potential of this country, Rob and Jennifer will look to reseed pasture paddocks every year, under sowing Crimson clover in paddocks coming out of crop and into pasture.

Perennial ryegrass will be sown dry - where paddocks are weed free - or after the break of the season and following application of a knockdown where weeds are a problem.

About 70pc of the farm is arable and split between crop or pastures, but Rob and Jennifer are now designating wet or rocky areas to perennial pastures.

Sceptre lucerne was first sown in 1998 and this particular stand still has a good plant density of 40-50 plants/sq m.

Another stand sown in the subsequent year has a plant density of 10 plants/ sq m.

Rob puts the much higher plant density of the earlier stand down to management.

"Winter cleaning to get rid of broad leaf weeds and grasses has aided its survival," he said.

Lucerne now covers 100ha on the farm and further areas will be sown to the deep-rooted perennial.

Last year's wet spring meant it was impossible to get on the wet country until November and then temperatures of 40C set in, Rob said.

Subtropical perennial grasses sown two years ago produced a lot of feed in the initial year, but they have not performed in subsequent years - the cold wet winter reducing plant density.