

Irwin Hunter & Co.

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Crusader Biennial ryegrass at Manypeaks.

Grazing, plus Silage plus regrowth.

Manypeaks farmer, Richard Metcalfe reckons last year was his best ever.

He runs 1100 Murray Grey cattle and 2000 sheep on his 1800ha property, 40km east of Albany.

"We got to the point last spring where there was almost too much feed," he said.

According to Richard there are good clover pastures on the property, but to supplement these, he has sown ryegrass for 18 years.

"We over sow 100ha every year," he said.

"Annual rainfall is 700mm and we usually get an early break and have the ryegrass sown by March so the pasture can get away in time for the April – May feed gap.



Last year he had good opening rains and sowed a mix comprising 80pc Crusader Italian ryegrass, a bi-annual and 20pc Roper perennial ryegrass at 15kg/ha early in March.

Richard says he has previously sown Noble ryegrass as early as February and so far he has been lucky and not lost an early sowing.

The 20 ha paddock was top dressed with 150kg/ha Super 3 in 1 prior to sowing and according to Richard, and the Crusader got away early and produced good volumes of pasture.

He crash grazed the paddock after spraying out broad leaf weeds early in May and then 100kg/ha of urea was applied. The paddock was then continually grazed by cows and calves from early June to September 1, when it was locked up for silage.

Richard's grazing program involves a combination of rotational grazing and set stocking.

"We move stock according to food on offer and usually put young stock on a pasture first, followed by cows and then sheep," he said.

The paddock had 200kg/ha of a blend fertiliser in mid August to set it up for silage.

"Usually we lock our silage paddocks up for six to seven weeks, but we had heavy rain in October and it was locked up for eight weeks," Richard said.

"We cut the paddock for silage on November 1 and it was still green at Christmas, with feed 30cm high."

Happy with the performance of Crusader last season, Richard is yet to see whether it regenerates.