

Irwin Hunter & Co.

Western Australia's Leading Seed Distributor

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“ Production more than doubled” – farmer

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This is the experience of Darren Burrows who, with his father Alex run a beef operation of 370 ha of undulating country near Albany. Alex purchased this property in 1981 when most of the pastures were producing poorly.



“With the use of new pasture varieties, we have been able to increase our production markedly. We are now carrying about 220 Shorthorn and Angus breeders as well as 45 replacement females,” he said.

This is the home of the Narralda Shorthorn Stud which has sold bulls Australia-wide. To meet this demand Darren and Alex are carrying about 40 bulls which average 21 months of age. Initially they were having difficulty with the persistence of perennial ryegrass on this country, which consists mainly of heavy clay with a hard pan in the sub-soil which restricts drainage and root growth.

With the pH of the soil averaging 4.8 they have found it necessary to apply 2.5 to 5 tonnes / ha of lime each year.

Dennis started by direct drilling Kikuyu and Phalaris in the spring. Then in the autumn they have been direct drilling a mixture of Progrow annual ryegrass, subterranean clover and Strawberry clover, and Paradana Balansa clover on to dry paddocks at the break of the season, with 200 kg / ha of three in one fertilizer.

The paddocks which received this seed were grazed lightly during the winter months and shut up in August / September for silage and hay.

"We have renovated between 10 and 22 ha each year in this manner. The Progrow is a fast growing very palatable ryegrass with fine leaves while the Paradana Balansa with its broad leaves. The combination provides a very balanced and high producing pasture. But in places the Paradana tends to dominate the pasture in some areas, so we are mixing it with a persian clover to improve the balance.

This well-balanced pasture with its high nutrition extends into the silage and we have found in recent years that it has produced up to 12 tonnes / ha. During the drier summer months and early autumn this silage is fed every day to our cattle and it more than maintains them.

"The 15 to 20 ha of Kikuyu and Phalaris we direct drill in October on our clay flats with a good dressing of fertiliser is also proving to be very valuable. The Kikuyu is sown at 500 to 800 grams / ha and the winter active Phalaris at 2 kg / ha.

"We find that after the silage is cut, the Progrow ryegrass re-grows fairly quickly so we let it go to seed. In one 15 ha paddock we grazed 35 to 40 rising 2 year old bulls on this regrowth for 2 to 3 weeks which benefited them before supplementary feeding began.

"By allowing it to self-seed, we have found that Progrow ryegrass re-establishes in the late autumn, providing valuable feed during the winter and early spring," Darren said.