

Irwin Hunter & Co.

Western Australia's Leading Seed Distributor

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New Tetila increases the margin of profit.

"I believe that if I can produce more good quality feed off my own property, I can increase my margin of profit by buying in less concentrates."

David McFerran made this comment on his 180 ha dairy farm at Margaret River where he milks 110 Holstein-Friesian cows the year round. He also feels that high producing pasture species are essential if good milk production is to be maintained.

He has been milking cows on this property for the last 20 years. In those early days his pastures consisted of mainly Wimmera ryegrass and various varieties of clover. With these pastures he was able to milk 70 cows throughout the year.

"We had a quota system which meant that we had to maintain a set-down production level each day. To achieve this during the dry summer months we needed good quality silage which we would harvest during the spring, so we had to have high producing pastures to lift quality and quantity.

"Today my aim is to direct drill 90 per cent of the paddocks which were harvested for hay and silage in the previous spring. This is being carried out in April – May, just before or on the break of the season.

"We use a disc drill and now that it is available, New Tetila ryegrass plus a Hay Silage seed mixture supplied by Wesfarmers at a total of 20 kg / ha, with 3:1 super / potash mixture at 200 kg / ha. With no



irrigation, these paddocks are ready for grazing before the end of May," David said.

He explained that the New Tetila Tetraploid ryegrass established very well after sowing. It has a broad leaf and it blends in well with the Surrey annual ryegrass and V34N ryegrass in the Hay Silage seed mixture.

He said that this property, which is called 'Clover Moor', lives up to its name because the existing clover re-establishes each year. So he finds it unnecessary to sow any new clover at this stage. But he is looking at some of the modern varieties of clover to maintain pasture balance and with a view to possibly increase the nutritional value of the pasture.

After the first grazing of his new pastures David applies Urea at 60 kg / ha and this dressing is repeated twice during the winter and in early September when the paddocks are closed up for silage. Also, they receive 200 kg / ha of 3:2 super/potash mixture plus 50 kg of Urea.

"We have found that to obtain maximum value from this management, we must spray out any Cape weed, after the pasture seed has established.

Last spring we harvested 25 half tonne bales of silage / ha by using the management I have described. This means that New Tetila and the other annual grasses we sowed have lifted our silage production by 25 to 30 per cent compared to 15 years ago.

"Our dairy herd receives this silage morning and night, supplemented with grain, which is fed in the shed. But unfortunately, this year grain in WA has risen in price by approximately \$40 to \$50 / tonne. With the additional quality silage we have made, we have fortunately been able to slightly reduce the amount of grain fed to the dairy herd.

"By feeding the dairy herd more good quality silage I would have lifted my production over recent years by an average of 1,000 to 1,500 litres / cow / annum. This can be taken further. I believe breeding a good type of dairy animal is of the utmost importance, and when they are fed good quality silage they are capable of even higher production," David concluded.

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