

Progrow Annual Ryegrass for Winter grazing and Hay production in the Wheat belt.

By adopting a rotational grazing system and sound fertiliser management practises Progrow annual ryegrass could produce up to 10 tonnes of dry matter over the growing period.

Progrow annual ryegrass is a proven variety in Western Australia that has performed very well for a number of years across a wide range of soil types and farming systems and is particularly suited where there is a requirement for early winter feed and or hay production.

Being a Westerwolds type Progrow annual ryegrass has very fast seedling emergence, resulting in quick feed after sowing, and with a prostrate growth habit it can be used where farmers are looking to reduce Wimmera populations for the later introduction of Safeguard ARGV resistant ryegrass.

Progrow annual ryegrass has the following attributes:

- Excellent winter and spring production.
- High quality forage throughout the growing season.
- Prostrate growth habit giving good ground cover and competition to weeds and other ryegrass, eg Wimmera.
- High production where good fertiliser practises are adopted.
- Very responsive to nitrogen applications,

To optimise the yields from Progrow annual ryegrass the following recommendations will provide a guide applicable to a range of situations:

- Ensure there is adequate moisture to initiate germination and support the plant through the early stages of growth.
- Sow Progrow at 10 kgs/ha plus any required legumes at 1.5 to 2cm sowing depth.

- Ensure adequate P, K, S, fertiliser is applied at the time of sowing to support the estimated production over winter.
- To improve tiller density lightly graze at 6 to 8 cm high or when the plant cannot be easily pulled out by grazing animals.
- Apply up to 25 units of Urea after the first and subsequent grazings prior to shutting up for hay
- Continue to graze on a rotational basis throughout the balance of the winter and spring grazing at between 10 and 15 cm high, or it can be set stocked
- if shutting up for hay apply the required fertiliser to ensure good hay production

By adopting a rotational grazing system and sound fertiliser management practises Progrow annual ryegrass could produce up to 10 tonnes of dry matter over the growing period. This has the potential to provide significant income over and above the production normally achieved from a Wimmera based pasture.

In a 350 to 400mm rainfall area, the well known Woodyarrup Stud, in the Broomehill Gnowangerup area grew a 50/50 mixture of Progrow and Dargo annual ryegrasses successfully weaning 940 lambs, (33.3 lambs per/ha set stocked), from early August to the end of October.

Progrow annual ryegrass can be grazed into the spring and early summer which will limit the seed head production of Wimmera therefore reducing the future seed bank. This is especially important where farmers are aiming to reduce the Wimmera population and the consequent effects from ARGV, and set the paddocks up for sowing into Safeguard ARGV resistant annual ryegrass the following year.

Given the increased prices for livestock and the income that can be generated from this investment the introduction of a high producing pasture option into the farming system will add profit to the bottom line whilst having the potential benefit of reducing the ryegrass seed bank of Wimmera, a positive position especially in the cropping areas.