Programmed Approach to Pasture Renewal

Improving your pastures allows you to capture the best value and return from your land. The PGG Wrightson Seeds Programmed Approach™ is an easy to follow step by step process to help you improve your pasture and increase the supply and quality of feed all year round.

- Assists to cover feed shortages
- Aims to provide higher quality feed
- Breaks the perennial weed cycle
- Breaks the clover pest cycle
- Breaks the perennial weed cycle
- Address drainage and fertility issues

Background

The PGG Wrightson Seeds Programmed Approach™ to pasture renewal allows a farmer to capture the full value of improved pasture genetics available in today's new grasses and legumes. It encourages the view that by treating pastures as a crop, farmers ensure they have a good supply of quality feed all year round.

Brassica crops are also an integral part of a systematic approach to pasture renewal. While being an excellent source of high quality feed to improve animal productivity and high quantities of feed to help cover feed deficits, they are a logical part of a pasture renewal programme.

Benefits of the Programmed Approach

- Improved supply of quality feed all year round
- Opportunity to break the perennial weed cycle using Roundup®, leading to pastures free of couch, Californian Thistle etc
- Opportunity to break the clover pest cycle (e.g. Clover Root Weevil and Nematodes), leading to better clover establishment and production
- Opportunity to break the wild endophyte cycle to allow summer-safe grazing and the introduction of novel endophytes
- Encourages forward planning and the opportunity to address fertility and drainage issues earlier, resulting in more productive pastures and crops
- Increases the success of establishing a new perennial pasture

Implementing the Programmed Approach

The Programmed Approach is easily followed using the table below, however if you need assistance at any time during the process, don't hesitate to call your local PGG Wrightson Seeds Sales Agronomist.

Year One - March | Figure 1

Action	Why
1. Spray out existing pasture with Roundup® + Dicamba® to control all pasture species, including clover.	Capture the full value of Roundup® by applying it in the autumn; let it move into the roots with the sap flow. Successful control of perennial weeds such as Californian thistle, couch and paspalum, begins with an autumn application of Roundup®. Dicamba® is used to remove existing clover. With no clover in the pasture, the population of clover pests, such as nematodes and Clover Root Weevil, will decline, enhancing clover establishment after the summer crop.
2. Apply Urea to overcome "Nitrogen lockup". Drill in a winter active ryegrass such as Feast® II, Nourish® or Concord® II. We recommend you use Ultrastike® treated seed for grass to grass drilling, to protect against Black Beetle and Argentine Stem Weevil.	Begin next year's summer cropping programme by building the winter feed platform with Feast® II, Nourish and or Concord® II. These paddocks will go from being the worst to being some of the best on the farm during the winter.
3. Take the opportunity to build fertility prior to summer cropping, with applications of lime and capital dressings of fertiliser. When using chemicals always read the label and talk to your local agronomist.	The best crops are grown in the most fertile paddocks.

Year Two - February/March | Figure 2

Action	Why
1. Oversow annual grasses such as Ascend or Diamond T to increase density.	This will increase the amount of feed for the winter and early spring months when feed is at the most critical.
2. Spray with a broadleaf chemical to control broadleaf weeds.	Applying the broadleaf chemical will help control competitive weeds and reduce seed set. Weeds will put pressure on the new perennial pasture sowing next year.
3. Continue to apply nitrogen fertiliser after each grazing.	This will ensure excellent growth as well as healthy pastures throughout the colder months of the year.

Year Two - August/September | Figure 3

Action	Why
1. Spray out the grass pasture with Roundup®.	This will ensure excellent control of annual and perennial weeds. This will also conserve moisture for the following brassica crop. Controlling all grasses in the paddock will ensure that any wild type endophyte present will be eliminated.
2. Cultivate and prepare for a fine seed bed and sow a brassica crop of Titan, Goliath®, Barkant or Pasja II. Be sure to use Ultrastrike® brassica treated seed. Any drainage work should be undertaken now.	The summer crop offers excellent quality feed through the summer months. A brassica crop is also an excellent way of controlling clover root pests such as Nematode and Root Weevil.
3. Monitor the brassica crop for insect pests.	Apply an insecticide if Red Legged Earth Mite and Lucerne Flea are present.

Year Two - August/September continued | *Figure 3*

Action	*Why*
4. Manage the brassica crop and apply nitrogen fertiliser after each rainfall event throughout the growing season.	Growing feed through the summer months is extremely valuable, so with any moisture available must be converted into dry matter. It is also the cheapest form of feed compared to hay and grain and is easier to manage.
5. Graze the brassica crop to optimise utilisation.	If the paddock is too big for the numbers of stock available, use electric fencing and reduce the area available for grazing. This will ensure the feed is being utilised and therefore allow for better regrowth if sown with Titan and Goliath®.

Year Three - March/April | *Figure 4*

Action	*Why*
1. After the autumn opening rains, monitor the paddock for weed germination and insect pests.	This is to ensure that the weed cycle is controlled for a third year and keeping insect pests under control.
2. Spray with Roundup® to control all perennial and annual weeds.	This is the last chance to clean up these weeds prior to going into a perennial pasture.
3. Direct-drill a high performing perennial pasture (see examples listed below), which may or may not include novel endophyte. Select varieties that flower late and have been selected for low aftermath heading.	The break provided by the brassica crop greatly reduces the incidence of Nematodes, Clover Root Weevil, perennial weeds and breaks the endophyte cycle. Now is the time to introduce new technology grasses and clovers.
4. Sow Reward Endo5 and or Excess® AR1 perennial ryegrass + white and/or subterranean clovers.	Reward Endo5 is a low aftermath heading variety. AR1 endophyte does not cause staggers and/or heat stress. Reward Endo5 is a high performing perennial ryegrass and being a tetraploid, is more palatable than diploids.
5. Always sow new pastures with fertiliser which should include phosphorus and nitrogen.	It should be assumed that the brassica crop has removed significant N, P, K and S, which needs to be replaced. Ensure that a soil test is taken and the correct levels of key nutrients are applied.

Year Three - May/June | *Figure 5*

Action	*Why*
1. Graze quickly and lightly as soon as seedlings are firmly rooted.	Large cows are okay, but ideally lighter stock classes (eg sheep or calves) should be used to lightly graze the new pasture. If using cows, pick a dry day and only graze for 2-3 hours to minimise "pulling" or "pugging".
2. Spray with a selective broadleaf chemical that is safe to clovers at 5-6 weeks after sowing to control germinating broadleaf weeds in the new pasture crop.	Failure to apply this chemical may result in potentially serious, long-term broadleaf weed competition in the new pasture from weeds like docks, chickweed, capeweed and thistles, etc.
3. Continue to apply 30-40kg nitrogen/ha after each grazing.	It will be 9-12 months before clover nitrogen fixation occurs.

LET'S GROW TOGETHER

Planning your forage and seed requirements in advance can make a big difference to your productivity. For over 75 years PGG Wrightson Seeds have been working with farmers to get the balance right.
To discuss your growth plans call your Sales Agronomist now.