

Managing Pasture through Drought

Extreme weather conditions have always been with us but now it seems that throughout the world they are occurring more and more frequently and with more and more ferocity.

Drought is an on-going threat in many areas of New Zealand, normally occurring on eastern parts of New Zealand.

Why is management important.

Good management through a drought will give pastures much faster recovery times, which will reduce feed out costs.

Depending on what happens, this may mean systems are back to normal in Autumn, rather than Spring. Good pasture supply may also create opportunities for buying stock coming out of the dry.



Drought Management Strategies.

- Decrease feed demand through destocking.
- Look after your good pastures.
- Sacrifice paddocks that are poor producers, or that you plan to renew, and feed out to stock on these.
- Once the drought breaks, allow pastures to recover & build carbohydrate reserves before restocking. (Ryegrass tillers need 2-3 leaves before grazing)

Plant reserves are above the ground.

The critical point to understand about managing pastures through the dry is that they have their energy reserves above the ground (not in the roots). So look after the best pastures by:

- Leaving some cover on them - this does not mean rank growth, but 2-3 cm of length.
- Destock them for the duration of the dry.

Pasture Species with good Drought Tolerance.

The pasture species that will be the best to persist through droughts are those such as lucerne, tall fescue, pasture brome, and cocksfoot.

If you have any questions or would like some more information please don't hesitate to contact Specialty Seeds.



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