

Pasture Pests:
Grey Field Slug (*Deroceras reticulatum*)
Information Sheet

Identification.

The Grey Field Slug is considered the most significant species of slug in terms of damage in pastoral situations.

Grey field slugs can be 40mm if out stretched and they are often larger than other slug types. They live on the soil surface or in the top 2-3 cm of the soil but will move deeper during cooler or frosty conditions.



The most common method of estimating the numbers is to lay out wet jute sacks overnight and count them up, if you can't find jute sacks use weighted sheets of plywood (of around the same size) will suffice. If you find more than six then you should consider treatment before drilling seed into the paddock.

Damage and distribution.

Slugs are found throughout New Zealand, throughout the year and are present in most mature pastures where they do little damage. It's the newly establishing pastures where the problem can arise.

New pastures establishing after a full cultivation program have little issues with slugs, however pastures being established by either minimal tillage or direct drilling can suffer severe damage up a complete loss of seedlings in the entire paddock. Slugs prefer, moderate temperatures, moist soil conditions and surface trash often found typical of direct drilled paddocks. Pre drill checks with the wet sack method should be done before any drill commences.

Even if the paddock is free of slugs we suggest you use a suitable molluscicides on the outside round or two of the paddock as slugs often come out of pastures surrounding the paddock to be drilled and cause significant damage.

Control

After you have assessed the potential slug population in the paddock as per the above instructions, we recommend the control method:

1. Broadcast 4-8kgs of Endure slug baits evenly over the whole paddock with a granule / bait applicator. *Note: Use the higher rate where slug numbers are high or under conditions of heavy rainfall.*
2. Add 3kgs Endure **mini** slug baits to your seed mix.



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Lifecycle.

Slugs can breed year round but prefer to do so when the conditions are favourable as described above.

The adult slugs are hermaphrodites and once mated can lay up to 500 eggs in batches of 20 – 80. Eggs then take 2-3 weeks to hatch and once hatched start to feed, they take 1-2 months to reach sexual maturity.

For more information or to discuss how to protect your pasture against Grey Field Slug please [contact Specialty Seeds](#)



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