

Dow at Grassland

The Dow AgroSciences stand at Grassland 2008 focuses on their Profit from Grass initiative, ensuring that farmers maximise their grassland potential and get the most successful results from using the right products at the right time.

Dow will also be launching Banish, the new spot treatment product for the non-professional to control a range of weeds including ragwort.

The losses to production from the key grassland weeds / Grassland weed competitiveness

SAC and IGER have both shown that weeds reduce productivity, and as a rough rule of thumb, each 1% of ground cover lost to weeds is equal to 1 per cent lost productivity.

Much research has been done on Docks. In a 5 x 7 metre rectangle one dock works out to 1% ground cover per hectare.

The armoury that you will be covering on your stand e.g. Forefront (what it does and why it's so good, what it contributes in terms of production gains) and Banish (more details and benefits)

Forefront is the leading treatment for grassland weeds, providing highly effective long-term control of docks, thistles, nettles, buttercups and dandelions.

Use of Forefront can reduce loss of productivity from weeds for up to 18 months, maximising grassland potential and eliminating the need for additional herbicide treatments. The impact of weeds can be even greater on silage leys than grass leys.

Colin Bowers, of Dow Agrosciences explains: "Our research has shown that in a silage ley, 5% docks can mean a loss of 3 tonnes of fresh weight grass per hectare. Converted to energy this is approximately 2478 MJ, and put into milk production terms, that's 468 litres of milk.

"When you multiply that with the price of milk per litre you get a true idea of the losses incurred if grassland weeds aren't treated effectively."

Application timing is essential when using Forefront, stresses Mr Bowers, "we can't stress enough to farmers that weeds really must be at growth stage, and more specifically rosette stage. Older, stressed docks simply won't take up enough of the active ingredient to get maximum efficacy."

Banish is a new spot-treatment weed control product, suitable for non-professional users, specifically developed for smallholders and horse owners. Banish is applied via a knapsack and can be used to treat docks, thistles, buttercups and dandelions as well as ragwort.

Banish is suitable for use in grass fields, paddocks, grass for hay and silage, and green areas which aren't intended for production.

As with other translocated products, best results are achieved when Banish is applied when the weeds are at rosette stage, which is especially important when controlling ragwort.

General recommendations on successful weed control – timing, weed sizes (any old adages e.g. 'Spray in June, spray to prune; spray in July, spray to die'), rates & water volume, speed of kill etc.

Old adages are way off the mark when it comes to spray timings.

There are a number of displays addressing this topic – how to achieve successful weed control. There are education plots looking at the impact of weed size, water volume, dose rate and the use of adjuvants.

Competition and giveaway

Enter Dow's competition on their stand to win the use of a New Holland compact tractor, for one year, totally free (except for running costs).