

Productive or Unproductive Grass Species?

With recent autumn rain, many paddocks will be starting to freshen up with green regrowth. Although this looks promising many pastures will be filling up with unproductive grass weeds including annual poa versus productive pasture species such as perennial or Italian ryegrass.

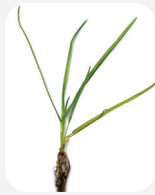
How well do you know your grass anatomy?

When assessing autumn recovery of pastures, it's important to differentiate between unproductive and productive species. Below are some simple tips for correctly identifying poa and ryegrass.



Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*)

- Plant: dark green in colour, variable in size 30-60 cm
- Leaves: pointed shiny dark green
- Basal sheath: red/purple
- Ligule: blunt/short



Poa (*Poa annua*)

- Plant: pale green, variable in size 5-30 cm
- Leaf: boat shaped tips and hairless
- Basal sheath: Whitish in colour
- Ligule: rounded and serrated

Options

Unfortunately, in pasture mixtures containing clover there are limited herbicide options to control poa. If pasture density is low due to recent dry conditions, and weed presence is low to moderate, undersowing is recommended to fill gaps before significant populations of weeds can establish. While soil temperatures are still favourable undersowing with Lush AR37, Supercruise or Feast II will provide a short to medium term fix, assisting with production of feed until pasture renovation can be completed.

If high populations of weed grasses are present a better result may be achieved by spraying the paddock out first with glyphosate and direct drilling into a clean paddock giving a better establishment. If it's too late for sowing and poa populations are high consider a spring cropping program and establishing a new pasture next autumn.

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