

LATE SEASON RYEGRASSES PAY FOR THEMSELVES

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"Granules of Knowledge"
April 2024

South west producers are relying on annual varieties to increase hay/silage supplies, using it in a rotation to "clean up" paddocks from weed species before returning them to perennial pasture systems and to gain the benefit of extra production over the winter months.

Producers often continue to utilise the same variety of annual ryegrass in the program, however, with genetic advancements seen in recent years, sowing the same variety could mean you're forgoing a significant amount of biomass.

Top 3 Annual Ryegrass performance vs Tetila

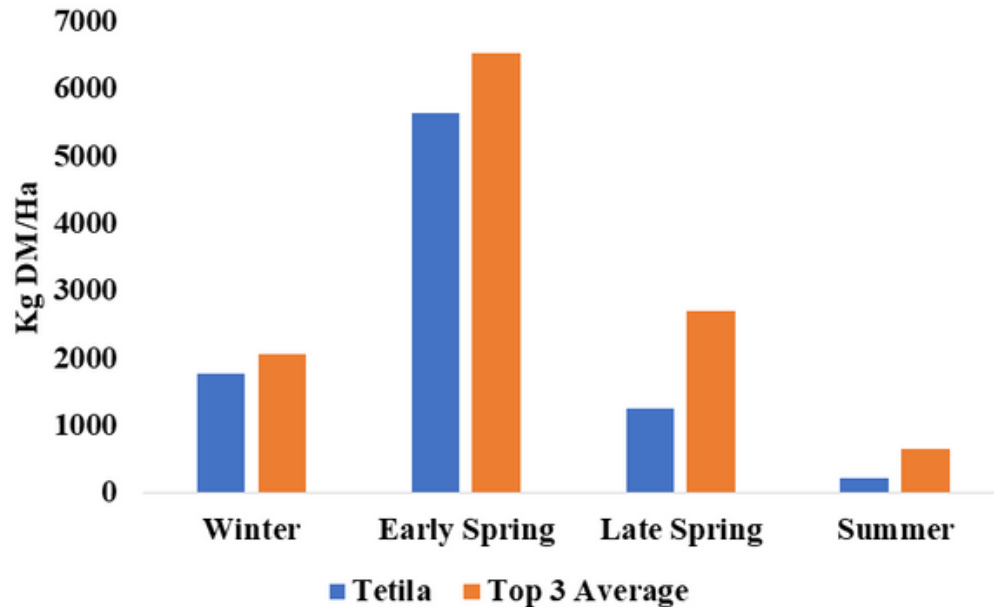


Figure 1: Performance of Annual Ryegrass against Tetila at Hilgay Trial Site

Each year Dairy Australia releases the economic value of ryegrass for each season, Winter (June/July), Early Spring (August/September), Late Spring (October/November) and Summer (December/January). Using this information and multiplying the economic factor by the biomass data we have collected, we are able to estimate an economic benefit from using "premium" varieties over Tetila.

Over the last two years at our local trial site in Hilgay, we have conducted two fully replicated trials to see Tetila side-by-side with some of these "premium" varieties. We can see from figure 1 that the winter production of the top 3 performing annual ryegrasses in the trial grew approximately 300kg DM/ha more than Tetila. When multiplying this by the winter economic factor, we get \$110.9/ha more production.

When sowing at 30kg/ha and a price difference of approximately \$1.5/kg, the additional biomass grown from the premium varieties has usually outweighed the additional seed costs by the first or second grazing.

The thought that we should grow cheaper varieties if they will be sprayed out in early spring to make way for a summercrop is extremely common, however, results suggest that the “premium” varieties will grow approximately 1200kg DM/ha more up to the end of early spring.

Variety selection is vital for production, particularly with a late spring/summer that we have just experienced. The numbers above speak for themselves, showing a huge economical benefit in keeping things vegetative for longer.

If you have any questions please contact your Vickery’s or McDonald Rural Agronomist.



Tetila at Hilgay Trial Site - Image taken 30/11/2023



Top 3 Performer at Hilgay Trial Site - Image taken 30/11/2023