



RE:SEED

Your Seasonal Newsletter

As harvest time draws near, farmers and growers are already starting to plan their 2023 cropping programs. It's a time for assessing rotations, preparing sites for future cropping, and identifying problem areas around the farm. It's also a time to reflect on the productivity of the past year and although too early to assess harvest data, many will be looking to learn from events this season and considering new approaches for the 2022/23 season.

In this issue of RE:SEED we're taking a detailed look into Bio-Stimulants and their role in grassland nutrition and agronomy with feature product Maxicrop Triple. We'll also be discussing forage crops for overwintering and fattening stock, and there will be a round-up of our favourite winter wheat varieties on the AHDB recommended list.

In our "Feed Focus" segment, For Farmers representative, Dr Bethan Till, gives some interesting information on balancing nutrition for those looking to blend their own feed on farm and we make an exciting announcement in our "Company News" feature.

PLANNING YOUR AUTUMN RESEED...

2022 has seen prolonged dry spells interspersed with short periods of heavy rain. For many first cuts came off very well but as the season moved on growth has been checked by drought conditions. Often, we see leys that have past their optimum life span suffer first, maybe not so clear to the eye but certainly when it comes to quality forage in the pit. A fact backed up by silage sample analysis. Inevitably non-productive "weed" grasses become dominant as leys age and will not produce the same quality DM yields as fresh young leys.



Supreme Mixture

Finding The Moisture...

The last two years have seen challenging conditions for spring reseedings with many opting for late summer / early autumn instead. The basic principles for a successful reseed are the same either side of the calendar. Seeds must be sown into a warm, moist seedbed with correct indexes for pH, P & K and in recent years this

has been achievable in the months of August and September. We can supply and advise on products to help with grassland establishment.



Megamix Mixture

Making It Pay...

"Well-managed grass is the cheapest feed for sheep and cattle. Improved grassland in most of the UK is capable of growing over 12 t DM/ha, but the current average is around 7 t DM/ha. Research has shown that increasing the proportion of the farm reseeded each year increases the amount of grass grown and utilised, resulting in increased profitability" – AHDB, 2022.

These words ring truer than ever in the current climate and not only will a reseed offset sizeable feed costs but tailoring the legume and herbal content of your leys can also help you to reduce fertiliser applications and costs.

Experience To Help...

At Powys Leys we have been advising on and supplying quality seed mixtures as well as grassland agronomy and nutrition for over 30 years. We have the products and technical expertise to guide you towards successful reseedings that will continue to profit your business year after year. As well as offering delivery services we carry an extensive range of mixtures in store ready-to-go.

Looking After Your Leys Has Never Been So Simple Or Cost Effective...



Although equating to over 50% of the total agricultural area in the UK, grass is often the forgotten crop taking a back-seat to cereals, maize, and forage crops. When it comes to making agronomic decisions, grass should be treated with the same care and attention as any other crop on the farm. Grazing and silage leys are the backbone of most livestock systems and can easily offer a better return on investment than many other commonly grown crops.

Getting The Nutrition Right...

With fertiliser prices remaining high and NVZ's limiting application windows for organic manures many farmers and growers are looking for alternatives to conventional fertiliser products.

Soil health is the buzzword of the day and for good reason, everything we grow relies on healthy soils with good profiles rich in microbes and nutrients. We all know the basics, pH, P, K, Mg but we are now only just beginning to understand the role micro-organisms play in the availability of key nutrients to our crops. Maxicrop Triple stimulates beneficial soil microbes, enhancing the growth and development of strong, healthy root systems. These beneficial microbes also release more nutrients from soils. The resulting healthier soils have better soil structure and improved moisture-holding capacity.

Research at the University of Bristol concluded that Maxicrop seaweed extract produced higher numbers of Pseudomonad bacteria than nutrient solutions on their own.

STIMULATING GROWTH

Maxicrop is also a powerful bio stimulant which influences the production of chlorophyll (the green pigment essential for plant development), reduces symptoms of plant stress by raising natural defence mechanisms and increases root and shoot development.

Research at University of Wales, Aberystwyth showed:

- Significant increases in root dry weight (190% of control)
- Significant increases in shoot dry weight (202% of control)
- Shoot dry weight increased due to an increased number of early formed tillers
- Leaf area increased by 50%

These factors can help give the following benefits:

- Improved establishment and ground cover
- Better rooting and nutrient uptake
- Increased tillering with potential for greater dry matter yields
- Better overwintering

Reducing Stress...

Bio stimulants also help reduce stress and growth checks in grass caused by drought which could adversely affect crop growth and leaf function. Maxicrop can help minimise this risk and maintain margins.



HERE TO HELP

At Powys Leys we have the products and expertise to help you invest wisely in your crops with approaches that have been tried and tested on farms and soils in our region. Speak to one of our trained advisors today to see how you can maximise the productivity of your grassland.

STAYING IN CONTROL OF COSTS WITH HOME GROWN FORAGE

Many farmers are looking to return to home grown forage as a cost-effective solution to over wintering stock. You may be looking to increase the overall cropped area of your farm or even introducing new crops into the system. These might include brassicas such as kale, rape or turnips or fast-growing hybrids.

Getting The Basics Right...

Growing forage doesn't have to be expensive or time consuming but will require a few basic principles to ensure successful and productive crops. Site selection is often governed by ease of access to farm, runback and water but should also consider soil type, nutrition and weed burden. A recent soil sample should reveal any obvious shortfalls and remedial action should be taken as with any other crop. The fundamentals of pH, nutrition, moisture, and seed-soil-contact apply to all crops and with a little attention to detail can be achieved quite easily.

Choices...

Deciding which crops and varieties will best suit your system / site might seem overwhelming but is crucial for a successful crop. We can advise on the best species and varieties plus we carry stock of the most popular lines with many more available upon request.

Protection...

Forage crops require protecting from pests, weeds, and diseases just like any other crop. The value of home-grown forage should not be judged purely on cost of establishment but also on value to the farming system as a whole (what would the equivalent forage or feed cost to buy in?). By taking care to look after forage crops, yields can be protected or increased and contribute greatly to your entire system.

Breaking The Cycle...

Many forage crops act as a pest, weed or disease break for other crops in the rotation. A brassica crop, for example, can be a good pest break for reseeding after permanent pasture reducing numbers of damaging crop pests such as leather jackets and chaffer grubs. While the cereal grower may value a root crop as a break against soil borne diseases such as take-all or troublesome grass weeds like blackgrass and brome. Grazing roots over winter also helps maintain healthy soils and reduce soil erosion, although care must be taken to reduce the negative impacts of poaching.

On The Doorstep...

Powys Leys are a local family run business with quality and service at the core of what we do. We have most popular lines in stock "ready-to-go" and offer advice to our customers on all aspects of growing arable, forage and grassland crops.



Zoom Brassica Hybrid

FEED FOCUS

Dr Bethan Till, For Farmers

Growing and Finishing Beef on Home Grown Cereals

With the rising feed cost and the need to become more self-sufficient, we have seen an increase in farmers turning to feed home grown cereals this year. In order to make the most of these home grown cereals, and to grow & finish cattle as efficiently as possible it's important to balance the starchy cereals with a source of protein, fibre and appropriate minerals. Balancing the ration with a source of fibre is important to minimise the risk of ruminal acidosis. Acidosis reduces the rumen microbial population and their diversity, reducing rumen stability and its fermentative capacity, therefore depriving the animal of nutrients. It's also important to balance the ration with the right level and source of protein, ensuring all essential amino acids are fed. Young, growing cattle need protein in their diets to support muscle growth, the rumen bacteria responsible for digesting forage also need adequate levels of protein to maintain their growth rate within the rumen.



Super Beef Mix 34 is a 34% protein pellet, formulated especially to be fed alongside home grown cereals. It can be mixed with cereals at variable rates to produce complete diets for growing and finishing cattle. The pellets are fully mineralised, ensuring the animal is supplemented with the correct minerals for maintaining health and for optimal growth.

We also offer Prime Mix 34 + Levucell. Levucell is a live yeast that improves rumen function by increasing fibre digestibility, therefore stabilising the rumen pH reducing the risk of acidosis. It has also been shown to mitigate against heat stress helping to avoid the drop in dry matter intake that can lead to a growth check.



Looking Back...

For most across our region we've seen a mixed season with prolonged periods of drought and short sharp showers. Autumn sown crops were drilled into good conditions and most winter wheat, barley and oat crops got off to a good start. It was a different story for spring crops with conditions far from ideal in March and April, a fact confirmed by the AHDB Planting and Variety Survey. Figures released on 7th July show UK wheat area is estimated at 1,807Kha, 1% up from 2021 while The UK spring barley area is estimated at 656Kha, a drop of 12%.



AHDB Trials

Looking Forward...

Staying in control of costs will be an important factor for many farms looking forward and growing cereals for use on farm will be a valuable asset. Many livestock and mixed farms opt for a mixture of autumn sown and spring sown crops with winter barley, wheat and oats and spring barley and arable silage being the most popular choices. This is the time of year to be planning ahead ready for next seasons rotations.

Not Losing Site...

Site choice is crucial for a successful cereal crop and some remedial action may be needed to address shortfalls in pH, P, K as well as assessing sites for troublesome weed burden and relieving any compaction issues.

Soil testing is a simple and accurate way to assess the basic nutrient supply. We offer full soil sampling services and can help you work out a nutrient plan to suit your site and cropping.

Variety is the Spice of Life...

With so many varieties on the recommended list it can seem overwhelming and confusing at times and often varieties may appear great on paper with questionable performance on site in our region. Powys Leys agronomist Will Barnes has been out on-site assessing winter wheat variety trials and has provided a quick round-up.

"Graham has always been very strong in our area and offers consistent yields with good standing power and respectable disease scores. However, being an older variety we may see some breakdown and a move towards varieties offering useful genetic traits such as the BYDV resistance in Wolverine. Gleam has been in pole position for many as a second wheat, but we have seen some dirty examples in recent seasons and a shift towards other varieties.



Graham, Winter Wheat

Currently the most popular variety on the RL is KWS Extase, a group 2 wheat which boasts exceptionally high scores for Septoria and high untreated yields. I suspect these ratings will drop as cropping areas increase and it's important to remember not abuse this variety by planting too early.

One variety that stood out for me was KWS Dawsum. It has very high yield potential in the West and good ratings for rust and mildew although it may need a little attention paid to Septoria to keep it clean. Standing power isn't quite as good as Graham but with an untreated yield only just behind Extase I am keen to try some on farm.

A strong contender for second wheat position is Champion from DSV. It's the highest yielding group 4, is suitable for a wide range of soil types and really excels as a second wheat faring well when sown early. It also has good scores for Septoria and yellow rust, two problematic diseases in our region. Standing power seems to be a weakness, however, so robust PGR's are a must.

I think there are some interesting things in store over the coming years, with new genetics offering chemical free solutions to some common problems. We often see yields lower when new genetics are introduced, but once these traits open out into the market and breeders address yield short falls we will be in an exciting place."

COMPANY NEWS

SUMMER SHOWS

As the summer gets into full swing, we are seeing a return of country and agricultural shows across the county. You'll find us this year at Llanfyllin Show, 13th August; Berriew Show, 28th August; Llanfair Caereinion Show, 3rd September. Keep an eye out for the Powys Leys banner and come say hello and get a light refreshment and maybe take part in our annual "Guess the Seed" competition for your chance to win a prize!



GRASS LEY MIXTURES NOW AVAILABLE IN NEW STORE

We are excited to announce that the Powys Leys Grass Seed mixtures are now being stocked at Tanat Farm Supplies in Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.