

DON'T TAKE GRASS FOR GRANTED – Supported by AgResearch

The green stuff you're standing on is worth its weight in gold. It fuels much of our export economy, helps get meat and milk onto your table, and our sports teams rely on it.

We have a wide variety of pastures ranging from the tussock in the high country, to the ryegrass sown in the majority of lowland farms. Many of the plants found in an average pasture aren't even grasses, popular pasture plants such as clover are actually legumes – the same family as peas, beans and soy.

Organisations such as AgResearch are working to ensure that we continue to have the pastures we need to keep farming successfully in our changing environment, and keep our livestock healthy, happy and productive.

Nutrient Mix:

High quality mixture of Clover and herbs → Low quality mixture of clover and herbs

50% Clover



20% Clover



5% Clover



Colour: Low level of dead matter in grass → High level of dead matter in grass

2% dead matter



20% dead matter



65% dead matter



Getting the mix right

Having the right mix of plants is key to farmers ensuring their animals get the nutrition they need to thrive.



Good pastures: Healthy animals need high quality pastures to help them grow and produce high quality milk, meat and wool. Ensuring that your pasture is in good order is a key part of ensuring this. It can sometimes take a keen eye to spot the problems though. Colour is usually a good indicator – the greener the better – and weeds and insects can also lessen the amount of good grass available to eat. Farmers use tools such as these pasture quality sheets and sward sticks to work out how the quality and quantity of the food they have available for their livestock.

Don't take grass for granted:



Split up into your teams and take a look at each of the grass samples we have on the table.

Can you identify in each of the samples: The percentage of clover, grass and dead matter there is? Rank the samples from 1 to 4 for which you think would be best for feeding livestock.

Sample number	Percentage of Legumes	Percentage of Grass	Percentage of Dead Matter	Quality Ranking
1				
2				
3				
4				

If you want to know more about pastures, and how they developed in New Zealand, you can visit Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand : <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/pastures/>

Don't take grass for granted:



Score guide:

Please total up score and present each team with a cheque, representing their total in dollars.

Accurate assumptions		/5
Correct use of tools		/5
Proposition		/5
Team work		/5

TOTAL		/25
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