Spray Grazing in Pasture
Spray Grazing

COST-EFFECTIVE PASTURE MANIPULATION

Whether you are growing permanent pasture or alternating in a crop rotation, you can be certain that weeds left uncontrolled will still flower and set seed ... their survival depends on it.

‘Spray grazing’ is an integrated management approach to weed control using herbicides and livestock. It’s a low cost technique that should be part of every farmer and grazier’s weed management strategy.

‘Spray Grazing’ is useful for:

- Maximising legume seed set in permanent pastures
- Reducing seed set in pastures that precede broadacre crops

The technique

Spray low rates of the selective broadleaf herbicides Amicide® 625 or MCPA 500 onto the pasture. Follow this with a program of heavy grazing. In normal seasons actively growing weeds are sprayed from about 6 weeks after the autumn break.

The effect from the herbicides overstimulates weed growth. As a result, starch in the weeds rapidly converts to sugar, making the weeds more palatable to grazing stock.

MCPA 500 is ‘softer’ on pasture legume species than Amicide® and clovers are more tolerant than medicos to these herbicides. Consult your local department of agriculture agronomist for information about the tolerance of pasture legumes to herbicides.
Spray Graze from mid Autumn to early Spring

The decision to spray graze depends on the composition of the pasture and the target weeds present. To warrant spray grazing a paddock, there should be at least 150 legume plants per square metre and greater than 30% broadleaf weeds.

Certain weeds are more susceptible to one herbicide or the other, so it’s important to walk over each paddock to identify target weeds. Then you can select the right herbicide and rate.

Dimethoate and Fastac insecticides are compatible with Nufarm spray graze herbicides. Their use can improve legume vigour and weed control by minimising stress from insect attack.

Grazing Management

Stock need to be withheld from the pasture for 7-10 days following spraying. This allows time for weed leaves to begin turning upwards and take on a ‘cabbage’ appearance, making them easier to graze.

Sheep are best for spray grazing because they graze closer to the ground. Wethers are preferred to lambing ewes and old sheep are preferred to young sheep because of their experience in chewing out the plant crowns.

The stocking rate needs to be 4-5 times heavier than normal to achieve an effective result. Grazing management is critical to success and strategies can include the use of electric fencing to isolate areas in a paddock.

Internal parasites (worms) in sheep and cattle reduce appetite so, for maximum grazing ability, ensure sheep or cattle are relatively worm free but not hungry.

Maintain high stock levels in Spring to prevent weeds from flowering, but be sure to remove stock immediately if the pasture shows signs of over grazing.
Beware of poisonous plants

- Capeweed
- Variegated thistle
- Paterson’s Curse (Salvation Jane)

These plants can be poisonous to stock, however stock losses from spray-grazing are uncommon.

With Paterson’s Curse (Salvation Jane) preferably graze stock soon destined for slaughter and avoid extended periods of grazing.

During ‘spray grazing’ stock may eat increased quantities of poisonous plants therefore ...

ALWAYS READ THE LABEL AND USE ONLY AS DIRECTED

Variegated thistle

Helpful hints

- Only spray one paddock (a small, weedy one) in the first year of your program
- Clearly identify the target weed(s) to ensure correct herbicide selection
- Herbicides work better in warm conditions
- Leave unsprayed strips across the paddock to measure herbicide effectiveness
- Ask others about their experiences with spray grazing
Benefits

For permanent pasture

- Greater productivity from increased carrying capacity
- Reduced wool contamination from broadleaf weed seeds
- Improves nitrogen fixation from a greater legume density and vigour
- Lower renovation costs due to more pasture seed set
- Increased quality/quantity of hay production

In a permanent pasture situation, more legumes mean more profit. To achieve a desired level of weed control in heavily infested pastures, a 2-3 year program may be necessary.

For pasture/crop rotations

- Reduces seed reserves of potentially resistant weeds
- Increases the quality and quantity of hay production
- Broadleaf weed resistance to group B herbicides in the cropping phase

In a pasture/crop rotation, spray grazing can reduce the levels of broadleaf weed seeds that could compete with following crops.
### AMICIDE® 625 - WEEDS CONTROLLED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weed Control</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Rate/ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caltrop, Capeweed, Charlock, Mustards, Paterson's Curse, Shepherd's Purse, Saffron, Slender, Spear or Variegated Thistle, Turnip Weed, Wild Radish, Wild Turnip.</td>
<td>NSW &amp; ACT only</td>
<td>280 mL to 1.1 L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsinckia, Thistles, Capeweed, Three Cornered Jack, Mustard, Salvation Jane (Paterson's Curse), Wild Turnip, Wild Radish, Docks, Geranium, Erodium.</td>
<td>SA only</td>
<td>560 mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Thistles, Capeweed, Doublegee, Mustards, Paterson's Curse, Turnip, Saffron Thistle, Spear Thistle, Geranium, Slender Thistle.</td>
<td>Vic/Tas only</td>
<td>560 mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Docks.</td>
<td>Vic only</td>
<td>1.1 L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsinckia, Docks (seedling only), Capeweed, Doublegee, Mustard, Wild Radish, Wild turnip, Paterson's Curse, Annual thistles.</td>
<td>WA only</td>
<td>600 to 800 mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spear Thistle, Saffron Thistle.</td>
<td>WA only</td>
<td>1.2 L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melons.</td>
<td>WA only</td>
<td>1.6 L + 1% oil</td>
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### MCPA 500 - WEEDS CONTROLLED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>State</th>
<th>Rate/ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caltrop, Capeweed, Charlock, Mustards, Paterson's Curse, Shepherd's Purse, Saffron, Slender, Spear or Variegated Thistle, Turnip Weed, Wild Radish, Wild Turnip.</td>
<td>NSW, ACT, Vic only</td>
<td>350 mL to 1.4 L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capeweed (refer to label for other weeds).</td>
<td>Tas only</td>
<td>700 mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capeweed, Dandelion, Seedling Dock, Three Cornered Jack, Geranium, Erodium, Mustard, Annual Thistles, Turnip Weed, Wild Radish, Wild Turnip.</td>
<td>WA only</td>
<td>925 mL - 1.85 L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier Thistle.</td>
<td>SA only</td>
<td>500 mL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA only</td>
<td>600 mL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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For more information contact your nearest Nufarm Territory Manager.

State Offices:
- VIC/TAS (03) 9282 1238
- QLD (07) 3893 8777
- SA (08) 8262 5999
- NSW (02) 6884 8180
- WA (08) 9411 4000

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