

## Healthy Soils, Productive Pastures project

# PASTURE TRIAL

August 2021



GS01254 - NLP - Linda Hamilton

### Winter 2021- Pasture Trial Update

With the cool season pasture species that were sown in Autumn have proved to be extremely successful. Five different blends were trialled plus a hybrid brassica. Each blend has measured between 3-3.5 tonnes dry matter per ha. Two different sowing methods were also trialled, direct drilling and hand broadcast over kikuyu has also been extremely successful showing that significant pasture improvement can be achieved without the use of multiple types of farm machinery.

June 2021



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### Autumn 2021 Pasture trial update

The pasture trial was re sown on the 21 April 2021. The trial sowing was conducted under two different methods, direct drill and broadcast via a small spreader by hand. Seed species included perennial and annual ryegrasses as well as cool season seed blends. All grasses were sown at a rate of 30kg per ha to give us an even trial point to compare plant numbers per sqm in each of the plot. All plots received the equivalent of 125 kg of an N, P and K fertiliser at sowing. The new plot was sown with a hybrid Brassica crop @ 8kg per ha with an N, P & K fertiliser. This crop will have an additional equivalent of 100 kg of Urea spread next week. It was also sprayed with a selective herbicide prior post sowing and watered in.

February 2021



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### Summer 2021 Pasture trial update

The summer crops of Kikuyu and hybrid brassica, worked extremely well for the flock of 20 sheep over summer.

After an initial few days of a timed grazing period to get the sheep accustomed to the different type of pasture, they made short work of grazing it down. Within a two-week rotation, we ensured adequate ground cover and sufficient feed for the summer season. It was disease and pest free, and recovered well after each grazing. A one off spray of selective herbicide was used to control the Johnson and Crab grass. Lessons learnt was that the crop was successful in reducing the weeds that were able to germinate during the season. The crop will be ploughed in as a green manure crop in Autumn.



July 2020



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### Winter 2020 Pasture trial update

With the cool season pasture species taking off we are looking forward to planning what is to be sown in Spring 2020. To reduce the weed burden to trial a crop that's completely different we plan to sow a brassica crop to grow over summer. This is a hybrid cross between radish and kale. Its suitable for sheep and cattle, is extremely palatable. It can be grazed in less than two months post sowing and can withstand multiple grazing's. It is also excellent to clean up a weedy site due to its dense foliage cover crowding out unwanted weed species. This species will be ploughed in next Autumn to get ready for sowing cool season species.

May 2020



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### Autumn 2020 Pasture trial update

At the pasture field trial at the Greater Sydney Local Land Services Demonstration Farm, after a very hot summer, the pasture species sown in Spring 2019 have established and grown well over the cooler months. Species include Clovers, Lucerne, Fescue, Prairie and Rye Grasses. These plots compared the addition of compost and irrigation to control plots. Results of these additions did not show a significant difference.

December 2019



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### Summer 2019 Pasture Trial Update

After an extremely hot summer, the main lessons we learnt was that the plot had a huge summer weed seed burden that needed to be controlled before the next crop was sown. Further more, the native species plot that was sown last spring did not established at all over the very hot dry summer. Thorough weed control and ideal conditions before sowing is necessary for native pastures to succeed as well as checking seed viability.



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### Spring 2019 - On-ground Pasture trial

The pasture field trial at the Greater Sydney Local Land Services Demonstration Farm has begun and was showcased to crowds at the 'Pasture Sowing Field Day' on the 11 September 2019. The field trial began with a soil test to assist soil preparation followed by sowing. This trial has sown four pasture blends suitable for cattle, horses and sheep in the Hawkesbury area. The trial consists of 16 plots where each pasture blend will trial four scenarios: 1) compost application and irrigation 2) compost application only 3) irrigation only and 4) no treatments. A grazing program will also be incorporated into the trial using sheep. This trial aims to assist primary producers in the Greater Sydney region around pasture management and resilience.