

# Progress of pasture trial

## CASE STUDY



Pasture trial at the Demonstration Farm

### Snapshot:

Trialling different seasonal pasture species

#### Winter 2020

At the pasture field trial at the Greater Sydney Local Land Services Demonstration Farm, 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. What was learnt is that the plot had a huge summer weed seed burden that needs to be controlled before the next crop is sown. Further, the native species plot sown last spring did not establish at all over the very hot, dry summer. It is likely thorough weed control before sowing is necessary for native pastures to succeed.

#### Spring 2020

The next stage of the trial involved sowing a Brassica crop to grow over summer. This is a hybrid cross between radish and kale. It's extremely palatable for sheep and cattle and can be grazed in less than two months post sowing and can withstand multiple grazings. It is also excellent to clean up a weedy site due to its dense foliage cover crowding out unwanted weed species. The results of the Brassica crop were excellent; it established and was



Staff assessing a brassica crop

ready to graze after 52 days. 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 germinated during the summer season. The crop will be ploughed in as a green manure crop in Autumn. The plot, which is divided into two, is to be grazed on a rotational basis, 2-3 weeks each. Pasture persistence and regrowth will be monitored over the summer.

#### Summer 2020

The third stage involved the summer crops of Kikuyu and the brassica, that worked extremely well as pastures for the mob of 20 sheep over summer. After an initial few days of timed grazing to ensure the sheep became accustomed to the different style of pasture, they made short work

of grazing it and with a two-week rotation between the two plots, we ensured adequate ground cover and enough feed for the summer season.

#### Autumn 2021

The next stage of the pasture trial involved ploughing in the brassica crop as a green manure crop and the plot then prepared for autumn sowing with annual and perennial species suitable for the cooler season.

The kikuyu plots were over sown by hand and mulched with annual rye and four strips of the other blends.

The remaining plots were direct drilled with four different blends. These included a Coastal Blend, Equine Blend, Hawkesbury Blend and two different annual and perennial rye grasses.

The pasture trial began in October 2019 with first of several different pastures species trials established. The trial aims to showcase how different pasture seed species perform in the local conditions of the Greater Sydney basin. Grazing management and monitoring will be undertaken during the growing seasons.

This case study documents the seasonal progress of the pasture trial and findings from Winter 2020 to Winter 2021



Sheep grazing at the pasture trial

For further information:



@GreaterSydneyLLS