



Michael Gowen - Downing - family farm



Michael Gowen



60.5 hectares



improvement of
grassland management

PERENNIAL RYEGRASS VARIETY SELECTION FOR RESEEDING

Pasture-based farmers in Ireland are recommended to reseed paddocks on their grazing platform yearly. There are many beneficial reasons for reseeding perennial ryegrass dominant pastures. It will provide more grass in the shoulder periods (early spring and late autumn). Response to nitrogen is improved by 25% compared to old permanent pasture. Paddocks have higher feeding quality and a faster re-growth after grazing. To help select varieties for intensively grazed paddocks on the platform Teagasc developed the Pasture Profit Index (<https://www.teagasc.ie/news-events/daily/grassland/identifying-the-best-perennial-ryegrass-varieties-when-reseeding.php>). This evaluates varieties performance in the grazing utilisation, quality, spring/autumn DM and other traits such as silage harvest. Michael Gowen is a spring calving dairy farmer in a pasture-based system in Kilworth Co. Cork. To improve the productivity of his paddocks Michael reseeds 10% of his farm area yearly.

To reseed previously Michael used to plough however, they have now adopted a disc and one pass system where the seed is rolled in.

Michael measures grass weekly and it helps him evaluate how different paddocks are performing on his farm. For example, how diploids are performing compared to tetraploids. Now Michael feels that tetraploids are superior in terms of graze out performance from the cows and the grass quality is better. When selecting a variety Michael looks for good spring growth rates, reasonable mid-season quality and a grass variety that is palatable to the cows within the Pasture Profit Index. Alongside ryegrass, Michael incorporates white clover into paddocks to reduce reliance on chemical nitrogen and improve sward quality in the mid-season. Other varieties such as plantain have also been trialled.

Farmer Interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svu2rolsmdw>

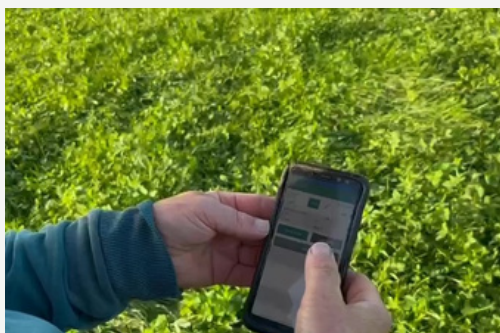


Photo credit: photos generated from farmer interview - Teagasc – Agriculture and Food Development Authority