

Undersowing



Since the advent of the Norfolk Four Course rotation leys have often been sown underneath a spring sown cereal. When done correctly, this protects the vulnerable new ley from hot weather and leaves a new ley well established after the cereal has been harvested. Any cereal can be undersown but barley and oats are most popular.

The competition factor should be reduced to a minimum by sowing the cereal, at two thirds the normal rate, and the ley seeds mix at the same time. The cereal should be drilled in and the grass seed mix broadcast on the surface, then

harrowed and rolled. Some farmers wait until the cereal is up with 3 or 4 leaves before sowing as there is less risk of having a lot of green material going through the combine at harvest. This is really only advisable in high rainfall areas and not usually necessary in drier districts.

Sometimes, if the weather is bad, it is not possible to sow before the cereal has germinated. In this case sowing of the ley mix should be delayed until the cereal is through and well established with 3 or 4 leaves.