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Sowing & Growing Guide: Pig Rooting Mix



Sowing & Growing: Establishing the Pig Rooting Mixture

When to Sow:

This mixture can be sown from mid April to early September when soils are warm, the soil temperature should be a consistent 7 degrees or more for a fast germination.

Sowing Rate:

The mixture should be sown at 15kgs per acre (37.5kgs per ha) which equates to 3.75 grams per m2. This sowing rate is slightly higher than some pasture leys because the large seeded Vetches are included in a robust proportion, to ensure they feature strongly in the sward.

Preparation: The best results for establishing this mixture are achieved by starting from scratch with a clean, weed free seedbed. This seedbed can be achieved by ploughing or cultivating, once bare soil is achieved it should be worked down into a fine tilth by cultivating or harrowing and then rolled before sowing to firm the surface.
The seed can either be drilled with a machine if one is available or broadcast with a spinner or even by hand. If the seed is broadcast, a second pass of a tine or chain harrow should be considered to lightly cover the seed, improving seed to soil contact, preserving moisture and shielding it from birds.I f the seed is drilled it should be sown to a depth of no more than 10mm. Once sown the area should be well rolled, ideally twice to consolidate the seedbed.

Management: In terms of utilising the forage, it will be ready at the earliest in 12-14 weeks from sowing, however it can be left to develop further for a couple of months before grazing, allowing species like the turnips to bulb up.
This mixture is designed to grow quickly and includes a range of species which are high in protein (such as the Vetches & Forage Rape) and species which encourage rooting behaviour like Stubble Turnips. Generally owners will accept that the rooting nature of the animals will destroy this ley, meaning that it needs to be resown the following year, careful management which includes rotationally grazing an area for a short period of time and then moving the pigs on to the next area and excluding the area they have just vacated, allowing it to recover, can prolong the life of this mixture.

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