

## Sowing & Growing Festulolium (Hybrid)



Festulolium (Hybrid) is a natural hybridisation of ryegrass and fescue species, combining the stress resistant genes of fescue with the bulky yield of ryegrass. To provide a more resilient species, with a better tolerance of drought or water logged soils, while still providing high yielding, very palatable forage.

The persistence of the festulolium species depends on which species were used in the breeding process. If a short term ryegrass such as Italian ryegrass is used, generally the persistence will be 2 - 3 years, the fescue partner can also have an impact on the genetic makeup of the plant, currently either Tall Fescue or Meadow Fescue are used. Future breeding will provide longer term species.

Ongoing breeding work will produce more varietal choice. Currently aberniche and lofa are two commercially available varieties, aberniche is the first festulolium to be placed on the UK recommended list.

**When to sow:** Ideal times are late March to September when there is adequate moisture for establishment.

**Sowing Rates:** 3.5 g/m<sup>2</sup> - 14kg per acre - 35kg per ha.

**Preparation:** If ploughing and power harrowing to create a seedbed, rolling with either a Cambridge roller before sowing is recommended to firm up the seedbed, break down clods and create a consistent tilth.

**Sowing:** Sow into a fine, firm seedbed at 10- 20mm, Broadcast seed should be harrowed lightly after sowing and before rolling. Rolling twice after sowing will improve seed to soil contact, reducing the likelihood of headlands establishing more quickly than the middle of the field due to the extra consolidation.

**Management:** Early cuts just prior to heading will give high D-values and good regrowth. Cut earlier and frequently to encourage high D-value leafy growth. Graze excess growth by November to avoid winter kill.