

Back from Grassland & Muck



We've just returned from two great days at Grassland & Muck 2017. In a first for the Royal Agricultural Society's biennial show, livestock featured on our plot. The six Texel sheep played a crucial role in the 'Intensive Rotational Grazing Feature' which we ran together with Rappa Fencing.

We were located in the centre of the showground and carried out demonstrations throughout both days to show the multiple benefits of mob-grazing and how a herbal ley can fit into a rotation.

Our herbal ley at Stoneleigh was sown in September and after a cut in April was looking long and lush, and the sheep certainly seemed to enjoy grazing it in the sunshine. The Texels belong to Macca, who works in our warehouse, and attracted lots of attention. We moved them half way through each day to show how easy it is to do, using the latest electric fencing options from Rappa Fencing and a moveable water trough, and Ian, Paul, Sam, Lizzie and Macca answered lots of questions from farmers.

We were asked about the long length of the grass and explained the 'graze a third, tread a third and leave a third' method which returns the maximum amount of organic matter to the soil. People were also interested to see how the soil under the grass was still moist even after two days of baking sun. Surrounding areas that had been mown were bone dry.

Other topics discussed included how a managed diverse ley is cheap, reducing the need for inputs, chemical fertilisers and feeds supplements. Ian explained how crops with overlapping growth patterns provide year-round forage and the plants in a diverse sward are also rich in protein, have anthelmintic properties, deep roots for drought resistance and mining nutrients, plus the ability to fix nitrogen. Maintaining a diverse sward increases self-sufficiency and builds soil fertility, adding organic matter. But the real icing on the cake, so to speak, is it's a really low cost system that leaves money in the bank.

We were giving away copies of Guide to Mob Grazing on our stand at Grassland and Muck but if you didn't come to the show or get a chance to pick one up, you can download it here.

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