Cotswold Seeds Ltd
The Cotswold Business Village
Moreton in Marsh,
Gloucestershire GL56 0JQ

Sowing & Growing: Establishing the Llama & Alpaca Mixture

When to Sow: This mixture can be sown from late April to early September when soils are warm, and a consistent 7 degrees or more for a fast germination.

This is a non Ryegrass mixture, which contains longer lived, but slower growing species, so it will take several weeks longer to emerge and 'green up' compared to a strong ryegrass mix.

Sowing Rate: The mixture should be sown around 14kgs per acre (35kgs per ha) which equates to 3.5 grams per m2. This sowing rate is flexible and can be increased to 15-16kgs per acre to achieve a 'green' cover more quickly.

Preparation: The best results for establishing this mixture are achieved by starting from scratch with a clean, weed free seedbed. This can be achieved by ploughing or cultivating.

Once a seedbed is achieved the surface can be rolled to break down any clods and firm up the surface. It should be left for several weeks to allow any weeds to germinate, these should then be sprayed off.

Once the seed bed is weed free, it can be lightly worked again by shallow cultivating or harrowing to produce the final fine seedbed.

The seed can either be drilled with a machine if one is available or broadcast with a spinner. If the seed is broadcast, a second pass of a tine or chain harrow should be considered to lightly cover the seed after sowing, improving seed to soil contact, preserving moisture and shielding it from birds.

If the seed is drilled it should be sown to a depth of no more than 10mm maximum, consider sowing at a half rate, in two slightly different directions, this will produce better ground cover and leave less gaps between each plant, leading to a tougher sward.

Once sown the area should be well rolled, twice to consolidate the seedbed.

Warning: If the field to be resown has been a long term grass field for many years caution must be taken, there is a high risk of damage to the newly sown grass seedlings from grassland pests like Wireworm and Leather Jackets, we would STRONGLY encourage you to speak to an advisor about this matter before proceeding.

Management: In terms of utilising the forage, it will be ready to lightly graze at the earliest in 10-14 weeks from sowing. At this point the 'pluck test' (See below) will give you an idea if the new ley is ready for a light grazing for a few days.

Grazing for a few days at this point will encourage the plants to throw out more leaves and tillers, thickening up the sward.

The ‘pluck test’ is a useful way to determine if a newly sown ley is ready for grazing, simply find a new plant and place a leaf between the thumb and forefinger, when it is ‘plucked’ it should break off halfway up the leaf, indicating the sward is ready for grazing, if the plant is pulled up by the roots, it needs a couple more weeks to ensure the roots of the plant are fully anchored.

After several days the animals should be moved off the new sward to allow it to recover and continue thickening up, they can be reintroduced in a further 3 weeks.

Adding Herbs: Some customers choose to add the herbs mixture to a new grass ley, this can help boost the availability of plant species with high levels of nutrients and minerals.

However the addition of broadleaf herbs in the mixture takes away the ability to spray out weeds like Thistle and Docks that may emerge when the ground is disturbed during and after the seedbed preparation and sowing.

If a herbicide is likely to be applied once the grasses have emerged its best to leave out the herbs and overseed them at a later date.

https://www.cotswoldseeds.com/products/2504/llama-and-alpaca-paddock

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