

Radical new product naturally boosts pasture growth

Imagine having 30-60% more Dry Matter (DM) in your ryegrass and clover pastures during spring and autumn.

That's the effect of a radical new product from Nufarm NZ, which is available now.

ProGibb[®] SG is a plant growth regulator for pastures which makes leaves grow longer and faster, creating significant gains in DM yield when climatic conditions limit normal pasture growth rates.

It can lift DM yield by 30-60% within three weeks of application and is most effective during spring and autumn conditions, making it ideal for New Zealand dairy farm systems.

Computer modelling by dairy consultants has repeatedly shown a minimum 2:1 return on investment for ProGibb SG over many different types and size of dairy farm business.

Properly utilised, the extra DM generated by this product offers dairy farmers the potential of increased productivity, less reliance on supplementary feed, and higher MS income.

It is naturally derived, and there are no withholding periods for grazing or milking. Nufarm has tested it throughout New Zealand over the past four years.

"Our findings show that ProGibb SG has huge potential for dairy farmers throughout the country," says Nufarm Development Specialist Cynthia Christie.

The most useful response comes in periods of typical feed deficit – spring and autumn, "when farmers are on a 30 - 40 day round but they really want to be on a 20 day round," she says.

Nufarm have overseen 32 replicated trials for ProGibb SG, and has also worked closely with Otorohanga farmer Trevor Walters on a farm pilot trial last year.

Trevor runs 210 cows on 70 ha. By October 2007, after using ProGibb SG across his property in August, his milksolids production was 11.5% ahead of the district average, and well ahead of the previous spring, which had been a record for his farm. Trevor's cows were also 0.5 BCS (body condition score) better at that time, which he believed boded very well for mating.

ProGibb SG is easy to mix and apply to pastures.

There is only one rate – 20 g per ha, plus 25 mL Contact[™] Low Foam per 100 L of water. The ideal water rate is 100 L/ha. ProGibb SG is a water dispersible granule, which dissolves very easily in the tank.

Correct timing is very important. ProGibb SG must be sprayed onto pastures within five days of grazing. One to three days after grazing is best, says Cynthia.

Soil temperature is also very important. Ideal temperatures are between 7 and 13°C, which is also typically the range at which feed demand exceeds supply.

Pasture plants must be growing – ProGibb SG will not reverse the effects of drought. Nor will it transform winter DM growth rates into those recorded at the height of spring. Sprayed pastures need to be fertile, with good soil moisture status, to support the demands of extra growth.

No more than two consecutive applications are recommended for any paddock per season.

Cynthia says it's quite probable that farmers will be able to treat their whole properties during spring and autumn but they will need to plan their applications accordingly, to fit within the five day limit after grazing.

"The way I see it, you'd plan to spray perhaps twice a week, doing three paddocks a time, one, two and three days after grazing. That way you wouldn't have to spray every day. Our Otorohanga farmer found that it took him an hour and a half twice a week to spray the paddocks he needed to, using his own 500 L sprayer."

ProGibb SG - Key Facts

What is it?

A plant growth stimulant for pastures. It is a naturally derived substance that stimulates rapid pasture growth.

How does it work?

It stimulates grazed pasture plants to grow longer leaves, faster than normal.

Is it just for dairying?

No, but it is best suited to rotational grazing systems.

What stock withholding periods are required?

Nil - ProGibb SG has no stock withholding period for meat and milk production.

Is it a fertiliser?

No.

How should farmers use it?

ProGibb SG can be used to give more DM per ha when farmers really need it – when they're tight on feed in spring and/or autumn. However, they must manage their systems to utilise the extra DM.

What are the ideal conditions?

Soil temperatures should be 7 – 13°C. Plants must be growing, with adequate soil moisture and fertility.

Is there a limit to the number of applications?

ProGibb SG can be used in spring and Autumn but no more than 2 consecutive applications should be made to the same paddock in each season.

Potential Benefits for Dairy Farmers

Autumn

- Increase income by milking more cows for longer
- Improve farm pasture covers and increase the feed wedge into winter



Spring

- Remove the early season feed shortage constraints and speed up the grazing round
- Increase income from extra milk by feeding cows better
- Reduce reliance on supplementary feed
- Improve cow body condition score
- Allow farmers to milk more cows on the same land area
- Improve feed supply for making silage