

Spray before harvest to lift silage ME

Latest research on spraying silage before harvest with Roundup TRANSORB® is attracting keen attention from farmers and contractors, Nufarm says.

With the spring spraying season imminent, the company recently presented results from several trials on pasture quality after spraying; the interval from spraying to cutting and lodging of silage crops.

Roundup TRANSORB is the only product of its type that has a label claim for application to pasture prior to cutting for silage and the paddock being cropped.

The effect of Roundup TRANSORB on pasture quality (and thus silage quality) after spraying is attracting widespread interest from the industry, according to Nufarm Technical Specialist Paul Addison.

And for good reason – better pasture means better silage, and that means more milk.

“We have been able to clearly identify economic benefits from this treatment, which can result in higher levels of metabolisable energy (ME) in sprayed pasture harvested for silage.”

Increases in ME typically peak 4-7 days after spraying and range from 0.1 to 0.6 megajoules (MJ) ME per kg dry matter (DM).

At a predicted milk payout of \$6.40 per kg milksolids (MS), even a slight gain in ME adds up very quickly, Paul points out.

“With an average increase of 0.13 ME for annual ryegrass, that’s potentially worth \$12.23 in extra MS income per tonne of DM.

“Thus if 4 tonnes of silage DM/ha was harvested it could potentially produce \$48.94 per ha extra income compared with the same amount of silage that was not sprayed with Roundup before cutting.

“At an increase of 0.6 ME for perennial ryegrass sprayed with Roundup, the potential gain is over \$169 per ha if three tonnes of DM is harvested.”



Day 0



Day 4



Day 7



Day 10

In the case of the interval between spraying and cutting, Paul says as a result of four trials with annual ryegrass, the recommendation is now to wait at least four days instead of two.

“It’s definitely a case of the longer the ryegrass at spraying the greater the interval needed between spraying and cutting for silage.

“To achieve a 100% kill you need to wait four days from spraying, provided there is no lodging.”

Both Tama and Andy annual ryegrass were used for these trials, sprayed with Roundup TRANSORB at 2 L/ha onto swards of two heights – 24 cm tall, and 40 cm tall.

At three days post spraying, the kill rate for the longer sward was less than 100%, but in all cases there was total kill from four days onwards, Paul says.

A third set of trials – looking at the effect of lodging on spray results for annual ryegrass – has led to further recommendations for farmers to get the best out of their crops.

Because of their very high yield, lodging is common in annual ryegrass crops that are planted in autumn and sprayed and cut for silage in spring.

“To ensure a 100% kill farmers and contractors should either take an early cut of silage, wait for the paddock to re-grow, spray and then take a second cut of silage, or graze off the paddock, wait for re-growth, spray, and cut silage or graze again.

“In either case they should grow more DM overall,” Paul Addison says.

Trials on a sward of Andy that was 47 cm tall when sprayed showed less chance of achieving a 100% kill with Roundup TRANSORB on lodged grass, even at higher rates (2.7 L/ha).

“This means some re-growth is likely. This is probably not a huge concern if the paddock is to be cultivated, but it will cause problems if the crop is to be established via no-tillage or vertical strip tillage.”

Overall Paul says the latest recommendations and findings will make it easier for farmers and contractors to achieve optimal results from their silage crops.

“Nufarm is committed to on-going technical support and market development for New Zealand agriculture – this work is just part of our R&D programme.”

For more detail phone Nufarm 0800 683 276, or visit www.nufarm.co.nz