

Farmers wasting money on old habits

Farmers are literally wasting money if they stick to their old habits for spraying out this spring.

New work by Nufarm shows that the common practice of grazing, then waiting for a paddock to freshen, then spraying out is completely the reverse of what should be done when farmers prepare ground for new crops or grass.

“Basically you’re sacrificing approximately 6 kg Milk solids per hectare by using this system,” says Nufarm R&D expert Paul Addison.

He believes many farmers simply don’t realise what they’re losing. “If they did, I’m sure they would think twice about how they do things this spring.”

The potential loss of production is all to do with how glyphosate herbicide works in the plant after it has been applied.

“Spraying stops protein production, but the plant continues to produce sugars, which it does not utilise. So soluble sugar levels in sprayed pasture rise by five percent or more causing an increase in metabolisable energy (ME).

“In other words for a short time the sprayed pasture has more nutritional value than unsprayed pasture.”

Grazing, then spraying not only completely wastes this gain in nutritive value, it also typically leads to a poorer spray result because farmers don’t wait long enough for adequate leaf area to re-grow.

“And it takes extra time which most of them in reality don’t have at this time of the year,” Addison points out.

His trials on both perennial ryegrass and browntop-dominant pastures last spring show Roundup TRANSORB® is the best way to capture increased sugars and ME, and it also has a significant cost advantage.



Above: Paul Addison
Nufarm Technical Specialist
- Market Development

“ME levels in sprayed pasture rise, but then they drop again as time goes by. Usually they peak around three days after spraying before falling away relatively quickly.”

With Roundup TRANSORB farmers can graze three days after spraying (or harvest silage four days or more after spraying), but with most other generic glyphosates they have to wait seven days before grazing or harvesting, at which stage sugar and ME levels are much lower.

This season, there’s a real premium on that time interval, Addison says.

He’s worked out that even with the \$5-10/ha extra cost for Roundup TRANSORB over generics, the former still has a benefit of \$32 to \$37 per ha at a \$7 kg dairy payout.

Potential milk solids gains are sacrificed by not using this system because the short-term gain in feed quality achieved through spraying and grazing three days later is enough to affect cow production.

For more information call Nufarm 0800 683 276.

