

GS4

Legume and herb-rich swards

Overview

GS4 Legume and herb-rich swards are abundant in legumes and herbs suitable for cattle and sheep. They also provide food and habitat for insects, including crop pollinators, and improve soil structure and water infiltration.

GS4 Legume and herb-rich swards are eligible for a payment of between £301- £400 per hectare under the Countryside Stewardship Mid and Higher Tier agreements.

How to sow GS4 Legume and herb-rich swards successfully

- Choose areas of permanent grassland cultivated within five years, temporary grassland and other agricultural grass areas. Avoid semi-natural permanent pasture
- Use in fields without a weed or slug burden as pesticide use is extremely limited
- Clovers grow less well in soil with a pH below 6.0 and index 2 for P and K. Improve soil with lime, manures or PK (but not N) fertiliser.
- Sow to a shallow depth onto a firm, clean, fine seedbed or onto an established sward, creating at least 50% bare ground
- Recommended sowing rate of 35kg/ha
- Aim to sow before 31st August to allow good establishment before winter



Available in 17.5kg per 1/2 Ha bags

contains




GS4 Legume and herb-rich swards in detail

A flowering plant mix of legumes, herbs and grasses.

Example GS4 Legume and herb-rich swards mix

- Festulolium
- Timothy
- Diploid Perennial Ryegrass*
- Plantain
- Red Clover
- Burnet
- Altaswede Clover
- Yarrow
- Alsike Clover
- Sheeps Parsley
- Birdsfoot Trefoil
- Chicory
- Sheeps Fescue
- Wild Carrot
- Cocksfoot

*includes Aber high sugar grasses for improved quality and animal performance

Requirements

1. Establish a mixed sward in the first 12 months of the agreement and maintained in subsequent years
2. Must contain a minimum 20% cover of red clover and an additional minimum 20% cover of other legumes, herbs and wildflowers (excluding white clover, creeping buttercup or injurious weeds)

Find out more:

[DEFRA Countryside Stewardship grants](#)

3. Must contain at least five species of grass, four species of legume (including Birds-foot trefoil) and four species of herbs or wildflower
4. Can be managed by cutting or grazing
5. Rest the sward for at least five weeks between 1st May and 31st July
6. The sward area may be moved within eligible grasslands as long as the total acreage is maintained
7. Do not use nitrogen-containing inorganic fertilisers or pesticides, except herbicides to spot treat or weed-wipe injurious weeds or invasive non-native species, soft and hard rush, nettles or bracken
8. Keep records of all field operations including associated invoices, grazing activity and fertiliser plans, plus evidence the grassland has been cultivated within the last five years if a permanent grassland area

Additional requirements

One of the following criteria must be met:

1. Follow or adopt a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
2. Qualify as a low intensity farmer

Disclaimer:

Information correct at the time of going to press.

Farmers and growers should ensure the mixture formulation meets the criteria of their agreement before sowing

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