Prairie grass

Scientific name(s)

*Bromus wildenowii*, syn *B. catharticus*, syn *B. uniloides*

**Strengths**

- Vigorous winter, early spring growth.
- Good summer production where moisture available

**Limitations**

- Perenniality short-lived.
- Not suited to poorly drained/heavy textured/infertile soils

**Plant description**

**Plant:** densely tufted, short-lived perennial, grows up to 100 cm tall

**Stem:** large tillers

**Leaves:** large-leaved, up to 30 cm by 8 mm; rolled on emergence. Very short hairs on upper side. Slightly rough margins.

**Seedhead:** open long pendulous panicle. Spikelets in groups of 4 with 6-12 florets/spikelet.

**Seeds:** Large, oblong, grooved grain, pointed at both ends.

**Pasture type and use**

Special purpose pasture for cool season growth and summer quality. Main use is by dairy farmers.

**Where it grows**

**Rainfall**

> 800 mm

**Soils**

Very well drained & highly fertile; light/medium textured; pH >5.5

**Temperature**

5-30°C

**Establishment**

**Companion species**

*Legumes:* red, white and sub. clover, lucerne

*Herbs:* plantain, chicory

**Sowing/planting rates as single species**

20-60 kg/ha; sow at ~10 mm depth. De-awned seed is available for easier sowing. Fungicide treated seed required to protect from head smut disease
Sowing/planting rates in mixtures
15-25 kg/ha

Sowing time
When soil temp. >10°C. Autumn, or early spring in long growing seasons. Sensitive to cold if sown late autumn/winter.

Inoculation
Not applicable.

Fertiliser
Requires highly fertile soil. Correct any nutrient deficiencies, especially K, N, P, S

Management

Maintenance fertiliser

Grazing/cutting
Graze at 4-5 leaf stage. Spell for 3 weeks in spring to 5 weeks in winter. Lax rotational grazing is advised but can tolerate continuous grazing; maintain below 25 cm for optimal quality. Do not graze if soil is waterlogged. Suitable for hay/silage.

Seed production
Seed is produced in New Zealand.

Ability to spread
Will regenerate from self-sown seed if sympathetically grazed in autumn; particularly in cattle pasture

Weed potential
Commonly found on roadsides in dairying districts http://web.cotton.crc.org.au/content/Industry/Publications/Weeds/WeedIdentificationTools/

Major pests
Army worm. Seedlings damaged by red legged earthmite and lucerne flea.

Major diseases
Head smut. Avoid by using seed dressed with fungicide.

Herbicide susceptibility
Glyphosate

Animal production

Feeding value
High; relatively high protein content

Palatability
Very good, including seedhead

Production potential
Good cool season vigour; relatively good quality in summer

Livestock disorders/toxicity
No toxins. For dependable mineral nutrition sow with legumes
Cultivars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultivar</th>
<th>Seed source/Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ceres Atom</td>
<td>PGG Seeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grasslands Matua</td>
<td>Wrightson Seeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tango</td>
<td>AusWest Seeds</td>
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Denotes that this variety is protected by Plant Breeder's Rights Australia

Further information

Weblink:
Future Dairy - Prairie grass
NSWDPI - Prairie grass

Acknowledgements

DPIs, Seed companies

Author and date

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March 2009