

PAMPAS GRASS ON HIGH COUNTRY

MUCH has been written in recent years about pampas grass, but most of these articles have been confined to pampas as a winter feed on low country or on heavy moist plains. This plant, however, will thrive quite well on hill country where conditions are hard and soil conditions not of the best, but on the harder soils plants take a year or two longer to establish.

Sheepfarmers need to keep fairly large herds of cattle to control secondary growth on high country, and, as few of these men are fortunate enough

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to have good hay paddocks, the question of feeding these cattle over the winter is a difficult one.

One of the following methods is usually adopted:—

- (1) Buying hay and feeding the cattle over the winter.
- (2) Starving the cattle over the winter, with many deaths in the late winter and early spring.
- (3) Selling the cattle on a poor market in the autumn and restocking at high prices in the spring.

(All these practices are costly and uneconomic.)

Or

- (4) Growing feed on which to winter stock.

It is with this fourth practice that pampas grass can be used to advantage, and it has proved itself to be a



Fig. 1.—Pampas grass in rough country.

Following last month's article on the establishment of pampas grass, the following articles give farmers' experiences with the plant as a valuable producer of winter fodder.

very economic and profitable species for this purpose.

Pampas grass will grow on most of the high country soils, and, if given reasonable treatment for two years, will become established and produce a fair quantity of feed in the third.

Planting Out

Successful growers in the Southern King Country have had greatest success by buying seedling plants and planting them out in a nursery bed for the first year. The plants are planted out in rows 1 ft. apart and 1 ft. between the plants.

In the spring of the second year, after the frosts are over, the plants are wrenched out of the nursery bed and planted out into the prepared beds in the permanent site. The preparation usually given is to remove about 2 feet square of turf and cultivate the soil to the full depth of the spade during the winter about two months before planting out the young plants.



Fig. 2.—A three-year-old plant in similar country to Fig. 1.

The holes should be 6 feet apart and in 6-foot rows.

After planting out, the young plants should be kept clear of grass and rubbish for two years. This clearing needs to be done two or three times during the first summer and twice during the second. Several methods of clearing are used. One is to slice the

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