

Prairie Grass Used to Advantage in Dairy Pastures

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BARE and weedy ground along hedgelines has long been a source of concern to many dairy farmers. To avoid losses many farmers have either trimmed a hedge so hard that it is no longer effective against winter winds or have done without hedges altogether. A dairy farmer at Omokoroa, Tauranga, has evolved a practical and useful method to overcome this problem by adding prairie grass to the standard mixture sown along the hedgelines.

HEDGES usually border the most fertile strip of every field because

Break grazing of pasture (left) and → prairie grass (right). After being closed in late autumn the pasture is ready for a second grazing and the prairie grass for a third.

of heavier stocking and camping in these areas. Therefore, it appears that many farmers are failing to utilise their richest soils.

Where new pasture has been sown at Omokoroa a strip 10yds. to 15yds. wide along the hedgeline has been sown with prairie grass as well as the standard pasture mixture. Seeding rates have varied, but the average would be 55lb. of prairie grass per acre.

Two- to 3-weeks-old calves running → on prairie grass planted along hedgelines.

Where the paddock has not previously been cultivated the ground can be worked up with discs, prairie grass seed oversown, and the seed covered with harrows.

Winter Feed Value

Prairie grass is well known for its winter production and the illustration at the top of the page shows the importance of the grass in providing three grazings to the two grazings from the ryegrass pasture over the same period.

Prairie grass about to be grazed → for the third time in 4 months.

With the use of the electric fence small areas like these can be utilised to the full by early calvers or herds on town supply. When the whole paddock is ready to be fed off the prairie grass presents no problem, as it is utilised with the rest of the pasture.

