



The first step in an effective grassland weed control programme is to identify the weeds present in the sward and the level of infestation.

- If the weed infestation is manageable and the sward is generally productive, herbicide application is a cost-effective approach to increase sward productivity versus reseeding.
- Some weeds are annual weeds; therefore, they grow for one year. Mechanical destruction (mulching/ mowing) of these weeds before they get to seed can be an effective weed control strategy.
- If spraying is deemed necessary, identify the product most suitable to address the weeds present. For example, if there is docks only in the sward, there is no requirement to use a spray that also kills thistles, nettles, etc.
- It is important to identify if there is clover present in the sward, as a clover safe spray will need to be used in those scenarios.
- Identify the intended use of the grass sward. If grazing, it is important to allow at least 7 days post herbicide application before grazing. In a silage sward, an interval of 21 days or more may be required between herbicide application and cutting date. (As different herbicides carry different grazing or cutting intervals, it is essential labels are fully read before use and all label recommendations regarding rates of application and the respective intervals are adhered to).
- When you have identified the weeds present, and established the correct herbicide for use, it is then important to determine if it is the correct time to utilise the spray. To get the best results from your spray application, the plant must be in a vegetative state and actively growing. This ensures maximum translocation of the spray to the roots of the weed plant.
- If the plant has passed this point and in its reproductive stage and starting to put seed heads up, it would be preferable to cut the weed plant and to target the application of herbicide in the new, freshly growing plant. The same rules apply to spraying during periods of stress, such as a drought, when the level of translocation to the roots is reduced. Spraying during periods of drought will not only result in poor weed control, it may also damage the grass and clover component of the sward.

TIMING IS CRITICAL FOR SPRAYING DOCKS:

