

New Farm Trials Endorse Hormones For Denser Sward

Farmers are just proving scientifically what leading greenkeepers have known for years - that natural plant hormones, applied to grass, can improve the quality of the sward and enable grass to respond more generously to routine care treatments.

The technique has long been proven on cereals, but the growing importance of grass in the costings of feedstuffs has prompted a more careful look at the extension of established hormone treatment to the grass crop and some of the figures quoted from trials make compelling reading for anyone engaged in the management of grass.

Trials carried out for Seamac Agricultural by specialist grassland farmers bear out the wisdom of what many greenkeepers already practise, based on experience and instinct. And a research programme promises fuller information, which will enable Seamac 600 natural hormone extract to be used with even greater precision and benefit on golf courses. More trials, to be independently monitored and assessed, are in the programme for this year.

In the meantime, it is worth noting that on one farm where observations were carried out with grass grown especially for a drying plant (which was, therefore, managed and measured more closely than is customary on a normal livestock farm), reports spoke enthusiastically of increased tillering and a noticeably heavier 'bottom' to the sward.

The trials were extensive enough to be significant - ten acres treated with Seamac 600 compared with ten adjacent acres untreated.

The management of such grassland has certain parallels with golf course turf, since it involves a series of repeated cuts through the season, with quick recovery needed so that cuts may follow each other as quickly as possible. All the signs pointed unmistakably to the effect of Seamac 600 stimulating tillering,

giving a denser sward from a vigorous root system.

Greenkeepers who already use Seamac 600 will know it is a wholly natural, non-toxic product that is environmentally safe and can be used on turf in constant use. The reinforcement of the grass's own natural hormone resources increases photosynthesis, stimulates more tillers and enables the plant to resist drought. The resultant thicker sward stands up better to traffic.

It is emphasised, by the manufacturer and greenkeeper users, that Seamac 600 does not call for any change of existing basic turf technique. Applied by sprayer at any time during the year, it is absorbed through the leaves and works by regulating the natural growth processes of the grass, thus actually enhancing the effect of whatever routine treatments the greenkeeper normally practises.

It has been the general rule to apply Seamac 600 to golf courses particularly as part of the autumn and spring management programme. One of the first results of the agricultural trials on grass is to suggest that there are extra benefits to be derived also from applications throughout summer, particularly to combat drought stress and the wearing-out of the sward in areas of heavy traffic.

The peak of the effect of treatment seems to come some weeks after application, but further work is being done this year on timings and greenkeepers may prefer to work out methods to suit their specialised demands.

It should be realised that hormones cannot themselves make grass grow from earth that is already bare, but they can improve the density of already growing grass, thus enabling it to stand up to the various stresses imposed upon it.

New Hydraulic Cylinder Mower From Green's

Green's has introduced to its range a triple gang hydraulic cylinder mower for use on smaller compact tractors from 16 din upwards.

Called the triple Bantam, this mower is mounted on the tractor three-point linkage and driven by a tandem pump on the pto, giving an 84in cut.

Each gang unit is independently controlled for cut, lap and lift and a mechanical safety cut-out is incorporated to prevent each cylinder running when lifted.

The outer gangs can be lifted while the gangs on the ground

continue to cut, allowing manoeuvrability round trees, benches, etc. Cylinders are 7½in diameter and are available with five or eight blades. The Bantam is priced at £3,340 (plus VAT) with five blades and £3,409 (plus VAT) with eight blades, including a one-year commercial warranty and free delivery.

Green's machinery is distributed in the UK by Claymore Grass Machinery, Fergus Square, Arbroath, Angus (Tel: 0241 73841) and 37 Dulverton Road, Witton, Birmingham (Tel: 021-326 7171).



The Green's Bantam triple hydraulic cylinder mower.