



Image 1 Damon Lobley in a very impressive mixed crop of forage, millet and legumes.



Image 2 Totally weed free.

Summer forage update – C4 Milk



Update on Damon and Lynette Lobley's summer forage crop.

The Lobley's dairy at Kybong, just south of Gympie on the Mary River. Their farming system has evolved over time to a point where they aim to grow a quality protein forage source on farm specifically to boost the quality of feed for the milkers in the autumn gap. The forage shown in the photos will be round baled in February. This silage will be shandied with corn silage to feed to the herd in April, when ryegrass planting commences. The ground preparation of this crop is interesting in that the soil has one pass each with a mouldboard plough and then the multi disc. This has resulted in a crop with no weeds due to the inversion of the top layer of soil. The crop was direct drilled on the 28th December with the following varieties and rates. Both the Lush forage sorghum and Siberian millet were each planted at 12.5 kg/ha and the Red Caloona Pea and Rongai lablab each at 18.75kg/ha. This crop was grown on no fertiliser or irrigation. However the crop has received 104mm of rain to date. A very impressive crop for not a lot of money.

Update on Errol and Julie Gerber's summer forage crop.

Errol and Julie Gerber have been including legumes in their forage crops for a number of years. The Gerber's recognised that they needed to improve protein levels in their milker diet to achieve higher milk production but it had to be done economically. Errol commented that the extra protein in the silage always helps reduce the purchased protein meal that's fed in the diet. Most recently, Errol has chopped a block of Rocket forage sorghum and cow pea for silage. Although he only used 10% cow pea in the planting mix, Errol said there was good establishment with the cow pea plants growing to waist height and had no issues when chopping. In previous years, Errol has also been very happy with his legume and forage cereal crop combinations, where he got 4-5 grazing's off his forage wheat, vetch and rye grass mix last year. In this instance Errol planted rye grass at less than half the recommended rate, and still saw strong plant establishment and growth across the season.

Update on George and Kasey Walker's summer forage crop.

The Walkers dairy at Cambaroon, south of Kenilworth. The Hayman soybean was planted to provide a high quality protein forage for this autumn. The soybean crop has performed particularly well and will provide a quality protein forage for autumn. This paddock was previously planted to triticale during the 2017 winter/spring. The crop will be grazed in April when ryegrass planting commences. The cows will be fed Liberty white sorghum silage during this period as well. Ryegrass will be then planted into the soybean paddock once grazed. The weather must have been conducive to planting on the 28th December, because George also planted on the same day as Damon Lobley. George simply offset disced the paddock days following an application of Roundup. He used Dual Gold at a rate of 2L/ha at planting, and then Verdict at a rate of 2L/ha once the crop had been fully established. The seeding rate was 100kg/ha of Hayman soybean which was inoculated. Fertiliser was applied at 200kg/ha of DAP, 100kg/ha of SOP at planting. One application of irrigated water was applied at a rate of 45mm, a shandy of effluent water and creek water. The crop has received 124mm of rainfall to date. A small strip of this fed to the cows in autumn along with late season tropical grasses will keep the cows fired up. ■■