

Establishment of lucerne at the Hamilton Proof site

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Patchy lucerne Feb 2005

- After sowing in October 2004, initial lucerne growth was patchy with areas of stunted plants
- Soil testing revealed a highly acid layer 5-10 cm ($\text{pH}_{\text{CaCl}_2}$ 3.9) not yet corrected by lime
- Since lucerne requires a pH of >4.8 , acidity was the most likely cause of stunting

- Paddocks were deep-ripped to mix the lime, and this caused little damage to established plants
- More lucerne seed was sown late August 2005, which successfully thickened the stand



Dec 2005



Thickened lucerne Dec 2005

- Production to April 2009 was 8-12 tonnes/ha.yr, comprising 47-99% lucerne
- It has been possible to thicken a young lucerne stand
- A lead time of 1-2 years should be allowed prior to sowing lucerne, to control weeds and correct acidity