

Introducing new inoculant strains to paddocks without reseedling

Top-dressing and head-start inoculation are proving successful in the field.

Many sub-clover and Medic cover pasture paddocks have not had fresh inoculant applied for many years. It is not uncommon for older pasture seedbanks to be symptomatic of poor nitrogen fixation with root nodule colonies low in number and pale in colour as opposed to the pink nodule colour which signifies the likelihood of good nitrogen capture by the plant. Provided soil pH and other nutrient needs have been addressed, upgrading the sub-clover inoculant strain to improve legume content and production is the next logical step to consider.



Above: Taking a look at Nitrogen fixation.

If moisture has not been limiting then nodule colonies when cut should be pink in colour and be on the roots from 6-8 weeks after germination through to the onset of seed set. Remember to dig and wash and not pull and shake as nodules may dislodge.

An improved Group C strain for sub-clover, WSM1325, has been in the market for some time now however vast areas of sub-cover have not had it introduced to the clover seed bank. The WSM1325 strain offers improved nitrogen fixation and nodulation initiation in acidic soils over earlier Group C strains and will effectively nodulate a broader range of trifoliolate clovers. Balansa and Persian clovers are now picked up by the new

strain and will give boost to the background naturalised trifoliolate annuals like Woolley and Cluster clovers.



Above: New lower soil pH tolerant strains can provide a production edge over background/paddock strains.

Sub-Clover growth comparison from the glasshouse. Control (no inoculation) vs. the paddock type (6N8) vs. the new commercial strains WSM409 & WSM1325 showing the production benefit.

ALOSCA granular inoculants provide a couple of cost effective options to introduce new strains to pasture seed-banks without reseedling. Top-dressing or surface spreading the granules with fertiliser or lime along with drilling the granules with cropping fertiliser or seed in the season prior the pasture coming back into the rotation (head-start inoculation) have been seen to be effective.

With spreading application onto established clover seed banks, growers are advised to mix ALOSCA with fertiliser or other similar bulk density product (possibly lime or gypsum). A reduction in spreader spinner rpm and/or ground speed to reduce swath width will even out granule size distribution.

Clover response time is driven by rate and moisture availability with higher rates and or greater rainfall following application improving the probability of new strain to plant interception.