

# Is your grass field ok?

## Spring Maintenance



When the temperature rises in Spring, it is time to initiate a maintenance of your grass field. If the field has been well maintained the previous year, winterkill may not be a problem, and using a spring tine harrow to air and even out worm droppings etc. may be all the grass field needs. However, if the Winter seems to have done damage to the grass field, the following two conditions need to be looked at and treated, if needed:

### **Pink Snow Mould**

Can be seen in places where the grass has been too tall before winter set in - normally it is seen on rejected spots in grazing fields. Areas with long grass should be cut as soon as possible to boost the growth of the grass.

If an entire field in your crop rotation has not been harvested in Autumn due to heavy rain, the field should be resown completely. Production and quality will simply be too poor, eventhough it is possible to trim the field (which can be difficult if the crop lies flat on the ground). Also clover will often become too dominant in fields having these problems.



### **Winterkill - bare patches**

Severe frost and not least black frost can damage the grass fields in terms of dead plants. The risk will be predominant in old grass fields (2<sup>nd</sup> or following year of use) - where the field has a surplus of nitrogen, or where the most recent cut has been taken with a too short stubble.

Living plants will, as soon as temperature allows, begin to grow. This will first show on the roots that must be white, and shortly green shoots should also be seen on the surface.

A grass field for cutting should have 15-25 living plants (clover or grass) per running meter in the row, whereas fields for grazing require 30-40 plants per running meter. Bare patches in the field should not be accepted - missing plants means missing production.

There are two possibilities in terms of improving your grass field - either total resowing or overseeding.

### Resowing of Grass Fields

The fastest way to obtain a new grass field - if the field has been winter damaged - is to resow in blank seed (with no cover crop) or in a crop for silage, typically barley for early silage or peas for early silage. For grazing also oats or spring barley can be used, if you sow 30-40 kg cover crop and 30-35 kg clover and grass seed mixture per hectare.



### Overseeding in existing Grass Fields

If your field has a good potential in terms of production, but only needs plants in big or small patches, overseeding may be the solution. **Overseeding** should be done as early as possible, however without damaging the field with your machinery. You can use an ordinary sowing machine with tight drillshares, or a spring tine harrow with a mounted seed bag. In both cases the field is rolled right after sowing. A sowing machine with diskshares can also be used.

For overseeding a mixture of fast growing species should be used like e.g. Italian Ryegrass, Festulolium, Hybrid Ryegrass or Perennial Ryegrass. If needed, clover should be added to the mixture. To boost the establishment a mixture with **iSeed®** can with advantage be used. iSeed® is a coating applied to grass and clover seeds which contains selected amounts of essential nutrients for establishment which are immediately available to the emerging seedling.