



# Equine Paddocks

TIPS, ADVICE & PRODUCTS TO  
GET THE BEST OUT OF YOUR Paddock

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# WELCOME TO HUNTERS

## Hunters *The hallmark of quality*

We have great pleasure in introducing our range of grass seed from Hunters.

Hunters remains synonymous with quality and value for money.

As a subsidiary of Barenbrug UK Ltd you can be assured that the quality and expertise Barenbrug has developed over the last 100 years is brought to the Hunters range of products.

Hunters Equestrian is a dedicated mixture range, especially designed for specialist equestrian applications.

To create the ideal mixture which is nutritious, palatable, persistent and with the correct seasonal growth pattern demands a high degree of expertise and experience.

We hope you enjoy the advice and range of products.

If you have any questions about the range, contact one of our regional specialists.



# EQUESTRIAN GRASS SEED

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Discover the Hunters range.  
Specialist products for farmers, estate managers and gamekeepers.  
Forage crops, game cover and seeds.



# MANAGING YOUR Paddock

Correctly managing your paddocks can make a big difference to the amount of grazing available for your horses and help it to withstand the pressure of horses' movement.

Good quality grazing pasture is the healthiest and most natural diet for horses and has the potential for areas to be closed off for hay/haylage production to provide winter feed (which has been very expensive to buy the last few winters).

A well-kept pasture can provide the most natural and healthy environment for work, rest and play for our equine companions!

## The demands on a paddock

Horse paddocks have to provide and cope with a number of demands.

They have to provide diet for 365 days a year, provide an area for resting and playing, and often an area for exercise.

Quality grassland is essential for year-round grazing.

Managing grass for horse paddocks is totally different to managing for agricultural animals, and horse paddocks tend to be small and are often intensively grazed by nothing other than horses.

Most owners like, or need, to be able to use paddocks all year round. Horses also require very different nutritive supply compared to productive cattle and sheep.

These differences can lead to many problems and horse owners may fail to realise that poorly-managed pastures supply little or no feed or totally inappropriate grazing.

Alongside low productivity, poorly managed fields can be the source of many internal parasites and poisonous plants. Similarly, soil ingestion from mole hills or large bare patches can cause colic.

Poorly managed paddocks will look shabby, be wet and waterlogged and subject to increased poaching and be unsuitable for riding or even in extremes, turnout.

For more advice, see our video '**How to get the best out of your paddocks**' available on our YouTube Channel.





# BASIC Paddock MAINTENANCE

Many grass fields have suffered severely over the past couple of years with compaction, poaching or tracking by machinery and waterlogging due to the high rainfall.

## Does this look a familiar scene?



Once you get closer to the soil, there could be areas like the above - big bare patches and many of the leaves are yellow, due to the plants being stressed.

This is a result of compaction of the soil caused by the high volumes of water beating down, and poaching by horses.



The roots can't penetrate down into the soil, which means they can't take up any nutrients, which needs to be addressed for the long term benefit of your paddock.

## Key factors

There are a number of key factors to basic paddock maintenance, which will help prevent future problems, which include:

Picking up droppings, rotating grazing wherever possible and not grazing grass right down to the ground.

Mixed grazing with cattle or sheep can also be very beneficial at reducing worm burdens and not allowing an excess of growth for horses.

## Daily Duty

Looking at the condition of your paddock should be a daily task and can easily be completed while you do other tasks such as lifting droppings, along with checking fencing and water troughs.

Throughout your paddock, look for any signs of bare spots of grass that may be starting to develop, whilst keeping an eye out for new/young weeds that may be coming through.

After it rains, check to see if anywhere is sitting in water for longer than necessary and on a similar note keep an eye out for any unnatural wet spots developing which may be from burst drains or water pipes to troughs.

If there are ditches around the fields then clearing these when necessary will make a big difference to the drainage of the field.



The basic tool kit you'll need

## The tools

Before you call in a contractor or invest in serious machinery, remember there are a number of hand tools you can use to undertake some of the smaller maintenance tasks.

A **metal shavings fork** can be used in place of a rake for 'harrowing' patches.

A **grape (straw fork)** can be used in small areas to break down through compacted soils.

A **soil corer** makes soil sampling easier but a spade and trowel are an alternative.

# 4 SIMPLE STEPS TO Paddock Maintenance

## How do I know if I need to renovate?

To renovate a field, first you need to identify the problems in the field.

Firstly, you have to know what species you want in your paddock then, if you have between 30-50% undesirable species, the best action is to remove these weeds and replace with the correct species by overseeding.

If you have over 50% weed grasses, you are more likely to need to plough the ground and start again as it is beyond repair.



## STEP 1 - Walk the paddock



The first step in paddock maintenance is to walk the paddock. Check for areas of bare ground where grass has been eaten away and weeds have taken over. (Especially common in feeding areas/gateways).

Look for damage by pests such as rabbits and moles. See if there are any areas where water collects as there may be a compaction issue to address.

## STEP 2 - Check the soil structure

The next step is to check the soil structure.

An easy way to look for signs of compaction is to take a spade and dig a hole in the field.

We need to look at the top few inches which are very important to a grass lifecycle.

If you have compaction in this area, a sward slitter will be ideal for alleviating this compaction.

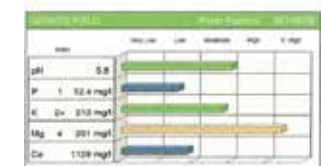
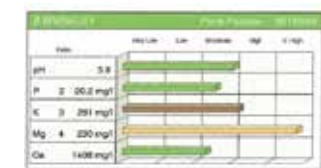


An easy way to check your soil structure.



Soil sampling

The results



A basic soil test is inexpensive will help you understand the levels of nutrients in your soil.

It is useful practice to soil sample every 4 to 5 years on heavy soil and 2 to 3 years on light soils and address any issues that this highlights.

The most common problem with horse paddocks is a shortage of lime, not phosphorus or potassium.

Calcium lime is very good for grassland as it is required in the higher levels than magnesium by the soil.



# 4 SIMPLE STEPS TO Paddock MAINTENANCE

## STEP 3 - Dealing with weeds

Being able to identify weeds and weed grasses common on paddocks is very important.

The critical weed to be able to identify is Ragwort, which is poisonous to horses, damaging the liver when eaten.

They have a daisy-like yellow flower, flowering from May to October.

Perennial weeds like ragwort, thistles, nettles and docks should either be dug out or sprayed.



Ragwort

## STEP 4 - Renovating the paddock

Before seeding you need to harrow (or rake) with a spring tine or chain harrows.

This can be carried out by a machine or by hand in local area with hand tools.

When carried out vigorously it removes all the dead material and shallow rooted grass and weeds in the base of the sward.

This opens up the sward letting in the air and light, allowing clean, fresh growth to come from the base of the plant. It also levels any mole hills and will highlight any particular bad areas of the field.



Spring tine harrow

After harrowing you can then go back in and overseed the paddock.

It's very important you choose a specialist equine paddock grass seed mixture that has been specifically designed for the job and will generally be hard wearing and will not produce overly lush grass.

### When should you renovate?

The best time of year to re-seed paddocks is when the ground is moist and warm enough, from April – September when grass is growing like in your back garden. The soil temperature needs to be over 8°C.

This allows the grass seeds to germinate and grow without having to compete against other weeds, which may be in the soil. By re-seeding in these conditions the plant will develop a good root structure, so that by the following spring, it's ready to spread and grow, thereby increasing the grass cover quickly.

After sowing it is important that the ground is rolled to help seed-soil contact which aides germination.

### Just a small area to repair?

If you are overseeding small patches by hand:

#### Application

- 1 Sow seed by hand or with a drop spreader (if possible when the ground is moist)
- 2 Lightly rake over
- 3 Roll lightly or walk over to press seed into soil



### Watering

- 1 Water in thoroughly, avoiding washing away any soil or seed
- 2 Keep well watered until grass becomes established.

### Should I add fertiliser?

If you get the soil right you stand a good chance of growing grass; all grass will benefit from feeding with fertilisers.

Do not fertilise at sowing because the new plants have no roots and unable to take up nutrients.

All you do is favour the existing sward and provide more competition to the new plants.

### The final tip

Ultimately, on-going management is important; a little bit of attention now and again will really pay dividends.

We should be looking at our grass and paddocks almost as often as we look at our horses.

The more you look after your grass the more it will look after you.

## GENERAL PURPOSE

## GRASS SEED

A mixture formulated to provide grazing for horses and ponies with intermittent rests from grazing to provide a hay crop. The mixture is designed to perform well with low inputs of nitrogen, but well-timed applications before closing off for hay will produce the best results.

### Designed for

- True flexibility, a paddock that will provide both grazing and forage production
- High persistence, for long term durability
- Even production throughout the growing season
- Producing a good, springy, dense turf.

### Benefits

- A horse and pony grass seed mixture formulated with a higher proportion of low fructan grasses, to provide good quality grazing and reduce the risk of laminitis
- Hardwearing species are included to withstand the pressures of equestrian use
- Performs well with low fertiliser inputs
- Young, well managed grass can provide most of a horse's feed requirement
- **This mixture is also available with herbs.**

### Sward Management

- This ley can be grazed throughout the growing season. The creeping growth habit of the fescue and meadow grass allows the sward to 'repair' any poaching damage caused by the horse. It is also possible to spring graze the paddock, then shut it up and take a good hay crop in mid-summer.

### In the bag

3.30kg Perennial ryegrass intermediate  
3.70kg Perennial ryegrass late  
4.20kg Perennial ryegrass turf  
0.70kg Timothy  
2.10kg Strong creeping red fescue

Available in 14kg one acre packs

Sowing depth: 6 - 12mm

## LONG-TERM HAY AND HAYLAGE

## GRASS SEED

Producing hay and haylage for horses can be a challenging task. The market demands quality, uniformity and the absence of dust, mould and noxious weeds.

Equestrian forages require nutritional characteristics which are high in fibre, low in water soluble carbohydrates (sugars) and low in protein at around 8% CP which suit a horse's digestive tract and metabolism.

Whilst being low in energy, around 10MJ/KG DM, the forage must also be palatable. Dry matter of hay can reach 90% whilst haylage is always lower but a suitable range would be around 55% DM.

By sowing out a sward specifically designed for purpose, it can be far easier to achieve the necessary standards.

### Designed for

- Professional producer or those looking to maximise home-grown forage production
- Will produce 1-2 cuts per year, with the option to graze over winter.

### Benefits

- A long term haylage mixture which will give good aftermath grazing
- Perennial mixture for long-term hay production
- The inclusion of timothy gives that special 'nose' to the finished haylage
- Produces haylage with ideal protein and energy.

### Sward Management

- To maximise the longevity of the mixture, ensure regular soil sampling to replace nutrients removed during cropping
- Care must be taken to not overgraze in winter, especially in wet conditions.

### In the bag

3.00kg Perennial ryegrass late  
5.00kg Perennial ryegrass early diploid  
5.00kg Perennial ryegrass intermediate  
1.00kg Timothy

Available in 14kg one acre packs

Sowing depth: 6 - 12mm

# 2-YEAR HAY AND HAYLAGE

## GRASS SEED

Producing hay and haylage for horses can be a challenging task. The market demands quality, uniformity and the absence of dust, mould and noxious weeds.

This mixture formulated to provide two years of hay/haylage crops with the option to lightly graze later in the season in dry conditions.

The mixture is designed to perform well with low inputs of nitrogen, but well-timed applications before closing off for hay will produce the best results.

By sowing out a sward specifically designed for purpose, it can be far easier to achieve the necessary standards.

### Designed for

- Professional producer
- Long growing season to achieve 2-3 cuts of quality forage per year.

### Benefits

- This seed mixture has been developed and proven over years to produce excellent yields of highly palatable feed.
- Some ryegrasses are susceptible to foliar diseases spoiling leaf colour and producing unwanted moulds in subsequent baled hay.
- The varieties selected have a high resistance to these harmful diseases. It is important to use diploid varieties as these are less sappy and more persistent.
- Delivers a tight heading date pattern allows for a very uniform crop each cut
- Italian ryegrass will grow at 3°C, ensuring a long growing season.

### Sward Management

- To maximise the longevity of the mixture, ensure regular soil sampling to replace nutrients removed during cropping
- Care must be taken to not overgraze in winter, especially in wet conditions.

#### In the bag

- 4.62kg Hybrid ryegrass diploid
- 4.62kg Hybrid ryegrass tetraploid
- 4.76kg Italian ryegrass tetraploid

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Available in 14kg one acre packs

Sowing depth: 6 - 12mm

# TRADITIONAL MEADOW

## GRASS SEED

The Traditional Meadow mixture has been formulated to recreate the nutritional characteristics of a natural habitat. The mixture is ryegrass free and uses species with a less aggressive growth habit to aid diversity.

Swards sown with this mixture are likely to be lower in fructans than a ryegrass sward, reducing the risk of laminitis.

### Designed for

- Reseeding pastures
- Particularly suited to native breeds and good doers.

### Benefits

- A horse and pony grass seed mixture formulated with a higher proportion of low fructan grasses, to provide good quality grazing and reduce the risk of laminitis
- Hardwearing species are included to withstand the pressures of equestrian use
- Young, well managed grass can provide most of a horse's feed requirement
- Multiple species promotes diversity in the sward, especially if herbs are also added
- **This mixture is also available with herbs.**

### Sward Management

- The mixture is slightly slower to establish and as such, not recommended for use as an over-sowing mixture
- Due to the design of the mixture it doesn't require high nitrogen inputs
- Performs well with low fertiliser inputs.

#### In the bag

- 3.80kg Meadow fescue
- 3.00kg Tall fescue
- 3.00kg Strong creeping red fescue
- 2.20kg Timothy
- 2.00kg Smooth-stalked meadow grass

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Available in 14kg one acre packs

Sowing depth: 6 - 12mm



# PADDOCK SOS

## GRASS SEED

Paddock SOS is a unique ryegrass blend, with very fast establishing grasses, ideal for anyone looking to boost grass cover.

If speed is the name of the game this is the ultimate in rapid repairs during the spring, summer and autumn months.

Paddock SOS has the remarkable ability to germinate at very cool soil temperatures – as low as 3.5°C – offering grass establishment into poached and bare areas at any time of the year.

### Designed for

- Ideal ‘get out of jail free card’ growing very fast in winter, helping support other mixtures
- Suitable for transition renovation and divoting of paddocks and pastures
- Germinates and grows all year round.

### Benefits

- Latest SOS variety 5ARLT germinates and grows at cool soil temperatures down to 3.5°C to sustain winter course cover
- Contains perennial ryegrass, Bardorado offering longevity in the blend as it has excellent performance characteristics, wear tolerance and disease resistance.

### In the bag

7.00kg Bardorado Perennial ryegrass

7.00kg 5ARLT Annual ryegrass

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Available in 20kg packs

Sowing depth: 6 - 15mm

# GALLOPS

## GRASS SEED

Hunters has had many years of experience giving technical advice to racecourses and racing stables in the types of grasses to be used where very heavy wear pressure is to be endured.

### Designed for

- Originally designed for racecourses, this mixture is ideal for the maintenance and repair of cross country courses or show jumping tracks
- Offers outstanding wear tolerance, establishment and recovery.

### Benefits

- Especially designed for Gallops using high wear tolerant dwarf perennial ryegrass
- Excellent recovery following wear or drought
- Superior recovery and persistency once established due to inclusion of smooth-stalked meadow grass
- Excellent year round colour
- Improved turf stability and traction
- Improved density at base of sward.

### In the bag

11.20kg Dwarf perennial ryegrass

2.80kg Smooth-stalked meadow grass

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Available in 20kg packs

Sowing depth: 4 - 6mm

# HERBS

In naturally occurring grassland many more species are found other than grasses.

While these are low yielding plants, they have the ability to supply different trace elements and minerals to grazing horses or ponies.

This blend of herbs contains many of the plants which are found in older horse pastures which can give valuable properties to the diet.

## Designed for

- Developed especially for horses and ponies and provides a useful compliment to many of our longer term grazing mixtures.

## Benefits

- The herb mixture has been developed especially for horses and ponies - it includes a number of deep rooting and nutritious species which provide a good source of minerals and trace elements
- It will add diversity of species to the pasture
- Perennial mixture of species.

## Sward Management

- For best establishment sow in strips or islands in the field
- Best suited to grazing
- Similar management to grass making it an easy option to add to mixtures and maintain.

### In the bag

|     |                 |
|-----|-----------------|
| 6%  | Yarrow          |
| 20% | Sheep's Parsley |
| 9%  | Ribgrass        |
| 45% | Chicory         |
| 20% | Burnet          |

Available in 1kg packs

Sowing depth: 6-12mm

# GRASS SEED

# IDENTIFYING GRASS SPECIES

Identifying what grass seeds you have in your paddock is a useful skill. Understanding what grasses you need in the paddock will also help you with ongoing maintenance requirements.



### Perennial Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*)

#### Attributes

Productive  
Responsive  
Quick to establish  
Aggressive  
Wear tolerant

#### Identification

Pink roots  
Dark green in colour  
Shiny  
Hard to pull up



### Timothy (*Phlelum Pratense*)

#### Attributes

Palatable  
Cold tolerant  
Wet tolerant  
Likes heavy soil

#### Identification

Paler green than PRG  
Dull rather than shiny  
Hairless  
Bulb at root  
White roots



### Strong Creeping Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra* spp.)

#### Attributes

Rhizomatous  
Fibrous

#### Identification

Stolons  
Fine leaves  
Hairy  
Purplish base



### Smooth Stalked Meadow Grass (*Poa pratensis*)

#### Attributes

Rhizomatous  
Hardwearing  
Persistent

#### Identification

Stolons  
Dull green  
Hairless



# CONTACTS

As a subsidiary of Barenbrug UK Ltd you can be assured that the quality and expertise Barenbrug has developed over the last 100 years is brought to the Hunters range of products.

Get in touch with one of our Barenbrug team for more technical advice and product information.

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