



## Paspalum - a grass for wetter areas on the tablelands?

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*Paspalum* (*Paspalum dilatatum*) is a common and, with appropriate management, productive grass in coastal, and inland irrigation, areas.

However, observing the way *paspalum* on the tablelands persists in low-lying areas, roadside drains, etc., and responds vigorously to summer rains, makes one wonder whether this would be a useful species to establish in higher-rainfall areas such as Braidwood or Crookwell. Even in lower-rainfall parts of the tablelands, *paspalum* may be a useful sown pasture in paddock depressions, creek flats, etc.

Once established, *paspalum* is very hardy, and though producing little in winter or a dry summer, it provides valuable green feed after summer rain. It also spreads readily, by seed. If allowed to become rank it can produce ergot-infected seed heads, which may lead to problems in muscular co-ordination in livestock; but then, nearly every pasture species has the potential to cause some form of stock ill-health.

To examine the potential of *paspalum* as a sown pasture on the Southern Tablelands, we sowed an experiment in late November 1989 on "Curradux", north-east of Braidwood. *Paspalum* was drilled at 10 kg/ha with superphosphate and Maku lotus, with and without Japanese Millet companion crop, and either directly into a herbicide-treated pasture or into a prepared seed bed.

Timely summer rains in the area resulted in excellent establishment and growth of all the sown species (and weeds). It appears that the *paspalum* and lotus have done best when direct-drilled, without millet, into the sprayed pasture. Further yield measurements next summer should reveal which is the best establishment method.

In the meantime, results so far indicate that establishment of *paspalum* under suitable conditions on the tablelands should be relatively simple.