

Late season weed control in grass

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September is an ideal time to spray perennial grassland weeds such as docks and thistles with a translocated herbicide, as the plants are starting to send nutrients down to their roots ready for winter and will take the herbicide down with them. In the UK, weed control in grass fields is traditionally done in spring, yet there is usually a good opportunity later in the season too. In fact, there are many good reasons for doing it in late summer and autumn. Treatments will be very effective as long as the weed is actively growing and remains so for about ten days after application. In fields cut for silage or hay, docks and thistles will have regrown well and are in a perfect leafy condition for taking up herbicides. Killing them now also allows the grass to re-colonise the spaces left by the dead weeds and sets the field up for a clean start next spring.



With grass covers in many areas more than adequate to meet current feed demand, it is easier to have fields out of action for seven days now to meet the required stock withdrawal period, than it is in April or May. Where the final cut of the year has been taken, there is no pressure to apply the herbicide at least three weeks before the next cut to allow adequate weed regrowth.

Spring is an incredibly busy time for livestock producers and weed control often gets missed. Management wise, spraying now makes more sense because there is more time for remedial field work. Where docks are the main problem, products containing triclopyr will do a good job. If thistles are present then go for a product containing clopyralid or aminopyralid. These active ingredients will all translocate deep into the weeds and kill the roots. Other tricky perennials such as dandelion and buttercup can also be controlled in September when they have leafy growth and flowering does not complicate the issue.

Newly sown leys



Newly sown leys will need weed control in September. Young chickweed and docks can easily out compete the young grass if left untreated. Products containing fluroxypyr and florasulam will clear out these problem weeds and allow a dense sward to establish. If clover is present, ask your supplier for clover-safe options.

Controlling two-leaf seedling docks in reseeds is much easier than tackling three-foot-high giants with roots to match next spring, so take the chance to get rid of them now.

Since November 2014, all farmers applying professional-use herbicides must have passed the City and Guilds NPTC Level 2 Award in Safe Use of Pesticides. If they have not, they need to ask a suitably qualified family member, neighbour or contractor to spray the herbicides for them. The spraying machine must also have been officially tested.

For more information on weed control, see the AHDB [Grassland Reseeding Guide](#).