

by Dr Jo Matthews of NIAB TAG

Why use the Recommended Grass and Clover Lists?

Grasses and clovers that are on the Recommended Grass and Clover Lists (RGCL) have been independently tested for six years – the first three to get onto the National List, then a further three years to become fully recommended.

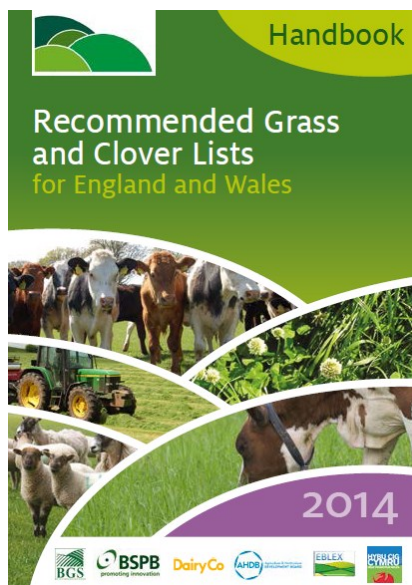
Only the best varieties make it. A group consisting of breeders, merchants, farmers and advisers makes the final decision based on data from trial plots grown across the country. Once varieties become out-classed by newer material, they are removed. The lists are funded by the breeders.

Eight new varieties were added this year – four intermediate perennial ryegrasses, two late perennial ryegrasses, one hybrid ryegrass and one red clover variety.

The new intermediate perennial ryegrasses varieties are Moira (diploid) and Fintona (tetraploid) from Barenbrug and Nifty (diploid) and Aberwolf (diploid) from DLF-Trifolium and Germinal Holdings respectively.



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Nifty and Fintona were given provisional general (PG) status as they have good grazing and mid-season quality traits.

Moira and AberWolf were given provisional specific (PS) status, which means they are good either for specific sectors of the industry or for a particular use. Moira has good third year yields for conservation crops; AberWolf demonstrates good all-around performance as long as the fungal disease dreschlera is not likely to be a problem.

Late tetraploid perennial ryegrasses granted PG status are Bijou from RAGT and Meiduno from Limagrain UK. Both demonstrate good yields under grazing and Meiduno has valuable late summer yield potential.

The only new hybrid ryegrass to be added this time is Aston Crusader from DSV. This tetraploid has good conservation characteristics with the potential for providing an early season bite.

The addition of a potentially high-yielding red clover combined with good protein content, means that Magellan from DLF Trifolium is a welcome addition to the descriptive list.

Each new variety brings a portfolio of valuable traits suitable for different situations, such as cutting or grazing.

Appropriate varietal selection can be the key to improving overall forage productivity and choosing from the RGCL ensures that all new grasses sown will be the best of their kind available.

The 2014 RGCL will be launched at Grassland and Muck on 21 and 22 May. The lists are available online at www.eblex.org.uk/returns or www.britishgrassland.com/rgcl. A new online tool to compare ryegrasses will also be online at www.dairyco.org.uk/rgcl.

More details about the new varieties can be found on the following page.

Name	Type	Page in RGCL Handbook	Page in full RGCL
Nifty	Intermediate diploid perennial ryegrass	10	8/9
Very good total annual yields under the simulated grazing management combined with a good mid-season grazing D-value. Above average total annual yield in the first harvest year, which includes good late season yields under conservation management. Good resistance to crown rust and mildew but is susceptible to dreschlera.			
Moira	Intermediate diploid perennial ryegrass	10	8/9
Good total annual yield in the first harvest year under conservation management. Good resistance to crown rust and dreschlera and very good resistance to mildew. Specifically recommended for the outstanding total annual yield in the third harvest year under conservation management, so to be used for situations where yield is more important than quality.			
AberWolf	Intermediate diploid perennial ryegrass	10	8/9
Excellent total annual yield under simulated grazing management all combined with an outstanding mid-season D-value. Outstanding total annual yield in the first harvest year, particularly the third conservation cut and very good total annual yields in the third harvest year under conservation management. Very good ground cover under both managements and moderately resistant to both crown rust and mildew. Specifically recommended for where dreschlera will not be a problem given limited data shows it being very susceptible to the disease.			
Fintona	Intermediate tetraploid perennial ryegrass	11	10/11
Excellent total annual yields combined with a good mid-season D-value under simulated grazing management. Excellent total annual yields in both the first and third years combined with a good second cut D-value in the first harvest year under conservation management. Moderate resistance to crown rust, very good resistance to dreschlera and excellent resistance to mildew.			
Bijou	Late tetraploid perennial ryegrass	13	14/15
This variety was initially tested as an intermediate heading group variety and as a consequence, conservation cuts were taken one week early. This may result in an under-estimation of the total annual yield under conservation management and also an over-estimation of quality. Very good spring yields under simulated grazing management. Very good total annual yields under conservation management including an excellent third cut yield in the first harvest year. Good resistance to crown rust, very good resistance to mildew and drechslera.			
Meiduno	Late tetraploid perennial ryegrass	13	14/15
Excellent total annual yields under the simulated grazing management including very high late summer yields. Very good total annual yields in both the first and third harvest year under conservation management. Good first and second conservation cut D-values in the first harvest year giving a very good overall production. Good resistance to crown rust, very good resistance to both mildew and drechslera. Ground cover can be poor due to erect tillers making it look more open.			
Aston Crusader	Hybrid ryegrass	16	20/21
Outstanding early spring growth for a tetraploid variety and a very good first conservation cut yield in the first harvest year. Very good total annual yield in both the second and third harvest years. Very good resistance to mildew and limited data showing moderate resistance to ryegrass mosaic virus and very good resistance to brown rust.			
Magellan	Red clover	19	26
Good total annual yield combined with excellent protein content at the first cut in the first harvest year. Outstanding total annual yield and ground cover in the second harvest year.			