

Pasture Weed Control – Supplementary Notes
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Effects of Pasture Weeds:

Research has shown that weeds such as Californian thistle, Scotch thistle and rushes reduce animal production from pastures, mainly through reducing utilisation of the pastures, ie animals are discouraged from eating pasture near the weeds.

However, clover content of pasture is also incredibly important, and knocking back clover content by spraying a herbicide like MCPA or aminopyralid can affect animal production just as much.

Research Using Weed Wipers:


By wiping effective herbicides like glyphosate to tall growing weeds, excellent control can be obtained with minimal damage to pastures.

Must graze pasture down low first to ensure pasture isn't hit, then wipe the weeds not grazed; narrow-leaved plantain seedheads not affected by glyphosate.

Californian thistle best controlled with wipers after flowering in autumn to get good movement from tops of stems down to root system (but not drought stressed); we obtained 93% decrease in stem density measured in the following season with double pass using 1:20 mix of Glyphosate 360 with water.


Some movement of herbicide down to pasture can occur with later rainfall, but this glyphosate concentration gave clover dominant pasture whereas clovers were badly damaged by clopyralid, triclopyr/picloram or metsulfuron (if it rained later).



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Other comments:

For all other thistle species, the objective is not root control but rather stopping seeds from forming, so weed wiping should be done as soon as they are taller than the pasture and before seed production has started; also avoid them germinating in the first place by keeping pastures dense, especially in autumn; or treat in early winter with MCPB.

Rushes and tussocks definitely need a double pass of wiper as plants on other side of clump get almost no herbicide wiped on them; only glyphosate works. Docks are harder to kill: need to add metsulfuron to glyphosate and wipe in spring when seedheads starting to form (0.5 g of Metsulfuron 600 product per litre)

Other pasture weed control recommendations can be found on my website:
<https://www.massey.ac.nz/weeds>