

Fowler Seed Marketing

Serving Your Seed Needs Since 1995!

Dairy - Growing High Quality Dairy Pasture

A typical grass-based dairy should have about one acre per cow of high quality pasture. In addition, dairymen should have another acre per cow in flexible forage that can either be made for hay or grazed as needed based upon the season. Many dairymen have at least a portion of their farm well-suited to the production of high quality pasture. Generally, soils with good fertility that are not excessively wet or droughty can support high quality pasture grasses with proper management. Lighter soils with lower water holding capacity are better suited as “flex” (hay or grazing) acres. Improved perennial ryegrasses, like **Mara**, **Barsprinter**, and **Remington**, maximize intake and nutritional quality for top milk production, but require adequate moisture and fertility. Soft-leaved tall fescues, like **Bariane** or **Baroptima+E34**, provide an excellent balance of palatability, highly digestible yield, durability and stress tolerance. Soft-leaved fescues can also be used on both high quality pasture and flex acres. **FSM Brand HQ-F** and **HQ-R** pasture mixes offer an ideal combination of Barenbrug perennial and Italian ryegrasses, soft-leaved, endophyte-free tall fescues (in **HQ-F**), and **Alice** white clover for rapid establishment and long-term productivity. Depending on the farm, grazing tolerant alfalfa, such as **FSM Brand 421-BR**, **Hakari Mountain Brome**, or late-maturing **HLR** or **Snowbelt** Orchardgrass can be used to add drought tolerance while maintaining feed quality. On a grazing dairy, everyday the cows are grazing high quality forage is a profitable day! Providing adequate and balanced nutrition for the grass and properly managing grazing height are key to achieving that goal. On our farm, we try not to graze below three to four inches, especially in the summer. We also use an **Agri-Energy Pasture Fertility Program**, based upon soil tests. By making three to four applications of balanced nutrients and beneficial microbes per year, we’ve been able to keep our high quality pastures healthy and productive through all but the driest weather. Ask your local FSM dealer for specific seeding recommendations, soil test bags, and details about how an **Agri-Energy Pasture Fertility Program** can work for you.



Photo courtesy of FSM dealer Eric Grim, Grim Dairy Farm, New London, Ohio