DOCK CONTROL

Figure 1 DOcks Rumex spp

Best control of docks will be achieved in good growing conditions when docks are actively growing and nutrients are actively being transported to new foliage and roots. If seed stalks are seen on the plant or if the dock has diseased leaves or is under pest attack it is better to cut/top or graze and allow re-growth of the docks before applying chemical.

Do not apply chemicals in a period of drought as the chemical will not be taken up by the plant leaves in sufficient quantities. Use the highest water rates on the manufacturer's label for best effects.
Allow adequate time between spraying and cutting silage for the herbicide to work.

Docks have a significant impact on grass yields, will often not be eaten by stock and reduce the quality of the silage.

Why are docks such a problem?

• They can germinate through the year

• Germinate from both seed and roots.

• Each plant can produce 60,000 seeds a year

• Seeds can be viable in the ground for up to 80 years

Spraying is likely to be economic when docks cover at least 10% of the field area. To calculate the dock cover, count the number of docks in an area stretching 2.5m either side of you and 7m in front of you (35m2), as the number of docks in this area is equal to the percentage cover of docks.

A spray programme over three years is often the best way to get them under control in the long term. When control and subsequent grassland management is good, the benefits of this spray programme could be expected to go beyond a total of four years.

For best results, docks should be treated at the at the rosette stage when the dock measures 150-200mm in diameter.

Contact Teagasc at www.teagasc.ie for information on control.

Figure 2 Docks in Grassland