

Sustainable Helicropping – Protecting our soils

Key activities to ensure your crop is successful are as follows:

Date	Activity
12 months prior to sowing	• Select area to crop and conduct soil test
Soon after	• Depending on soil test results, apply lime / capital phosphate
3 months prior to sowing	• Ensure helicopter pilot is primed
3 weeks prior to sowing	• Graze pasture to 1500 cover. Want a nice leafy pasture when sprayed that is 3-6 cm deep
Day of sowing	1. Spray Weedmaster (Glyphosate) + Insecticides Use a higher Glyphosate rate rather than lower (2 or 3 kg ai glyphosate/ha) depending on weeds targeted. To control springtails and greasy cutworm. Should use an organo phosphate for springtails plus a soil active synthetic pyrethroid for cutworm. Discuss with your merchant.
	2. Broadcast Seed + Slugbait / Slugout Use twice normal seed rate. Use the high rate – always. Two passes at half rates will give better distribution than one pass at full rate. These can be mixed together or flown on separate passes. Size of job and hopper opening will drive this decision.
	3. Broadcast Fertiliser Use Cropzeal Boron Boost if sowing a brassica crop. Apply at 500 kg/ha
	Close gate Go home for breakfast
4-5 weeks after sowing	1. Spray Herbicide + Insecticide May need both grass (eg Sequence) & broadleaf herbicides. To control diamond backed moth and white butterfly. Talk to your merchant.
	2. Broadcast Sustain Apply 200 kg/ha. Don't wait for rain. Just do it.
4 weeks later	Spray Insecticide For DBM & White butterfly May require another spray. Economics will depend on helicopter proximity
June - Sept	Harvest With stock Some rules: 1. Graze from top of slope towards the base if using a break fence. 2. If serious rain expected, remove stock to prevent soil damage. 3. Don't overstock/pug a steep hillside. You want it to produce in the future. Once pugged not a lot can be done to rectify it. Soil loss is unacceptable.
After harvest - two options	Option 1: Regrass to Perennial pasture If climate/aspect allows for spring sowing
	Option 2: Grow a second crop Kale Turnips Chicory (Choice) Plantain (Tonic) & clover Kale will lead to regrassing next spring. Turnips can be regrassed in the coming autumn. Chicory could be grazed for one or more seasons but less productive during winter. A 2-3 year crop that nicely follows kale or swedes, specifically for lamb fattening. Being broadleaf crops, all of these crops offer the opportunity to use broadleaf crop selective grass herbicides.