

**Tuatara**  
Plantain

## Key Features



Year-round dry matter contributor



Source of key minerals



Robust cooler season growth



Ideal in wide climate range & fertility



Extended seasonal production



### References

- <sup>1</sup> Moorhead & Piggot 2009
- <sup>2</sup> Sinhadipathige et al. 2012 & Judson et al. 2009
- <sup>3</sup> Hutton et al. 2001
- <sup>4</sup> Golding et al. 2008, Kemp et al. 2010
- <sup>5</sup> Kemp et al. 2010
- <sup>6</sup> Moorhead et al. 2002
- <sup>7</sup> Turner 1999
- <sup>8</sup> Navarrete et al. 2013
- <sup>9</sup> Kemp et al. 2013

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**Tuatara**  
Plantain

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→ **Tuatara, a perennial grazing herb delivering minerals and improved liveweight gains.**

# Tuatara Plantain

## General Facts

Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). Plantain is a perennial herb that performs well in a range of pastures. This well-known plant has been developed into a vigorous and erect growing winter active pasture cultivar.

Plantain is highly palatable to animals, establishes rapidly, is pest tolerant and has a high mineral content. Plantain demonstrates a high tolerance to summer heat and in warmer regions can provide valuable growth during summer.<sup>1</sup>

Plantain can be used as a pure sward or as a combination in pasture mixtures, especially in dryland or warmer regions. In pasture situations plantain rarely exceeds 20% of the pasture, although it can reach more than 50% in dry summers because of its drought tolerance.

Plantain can be mixed with red and white clovers (sub clovers in the autumn) with the addition of chicory to finish lambs and bulls, or combined with multiple graze brassicas and clovers for lamb finishing.

Plantain DM yields vary greatly between seasons and are heavily influenced by summer rainfall. In wet seasons yields of 11 – 15 t DM/ha are possible, but in dry seasons yields of 6 – 9 t DM/ha are more realistic.

Tuatara is a fast-establishing species, productive and persistent over a broad range of soils and climatic conditions, particularly less fertile soils and dryland regions.

## Animal Performance

Winter active plantain is a valuable source of early spring growth.<sup>2</sup> Trials have shown when ewes are lambed onto pastures containing plantain the lambs have a higher rate of live weight gain than those on ryegrass based pasture.

Pastures containing plantain combined with red and white clover plus chicory have increased ewe milk production and ewe and lamb live weight gain in spring.<sup>3</sup> Several experiments have confirmed plantain combined with red and white clovers, with or without the addition of chicory, will support weight gains of 250 – 350 gms/day in weaned lambs at high stocking rates.<sup>4</sup>

When compared with ryegrass and white clover pastures the plantain and clover mix produced 720 kg/ha of net carcass weight in a year compared with 400 kg/ha on the ryegrass and clover.<sup>5</sup>

Trials have shown animals grazing pastures containing plantain can have an increased uptake of both copper and selenium.<sup>6</sup> Plantain has also been found to reduce the incidence of dags on lambs.<sup>7</sup>

## Management

Plantain seed should be shallow sown, or can be broadcast successfully. It can also be oversown on hill country. Grazing management should aim to minimise seed head frequency.

Plantain tolerates frequent grazing at 2 – 4 week intervals.<sup>8</sup> Post grazing residual heights for best intake and plantain re-growth vary depending on management, but can be 7 cm for sheep and 10 cm for cattle when under rotational grazing.<sup>9</sup>

## Sowing Recommendations

Tuatara is recommended for a wide range of soil fertility, soil types and climatic zones.

<i>High performance finishing pasture</i>	<i>kg/ha</i>
<b>Tuatara plantain</b>	<b>2</b>
Perennial ryegrass AR1	18
Kakariki white clover	4
Red clover	4
Chicory	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

  

<i>Brassica forage system</i>	<i>kg/ha</i>
<b>Tuatara plantain</b>	<b>2</b>
Forage brassica	3
Chicory	1
Red clover	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>