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Lucerne, which is resistant to grass grub, was compared with grass-clover pasture without grass grub control in a farmlet study for two years from June 1978 to May 1980.

In South Taranaki the effects of grass grub damage usually coincide with a dry period in summer/autumn. Grass grub damage on the trial area was moderate in 1978/9 with some moisture stress but in 1979/80 moisture stress and damage were negligible.

**Fig. 1:** Annual Pasture growth rate and milk yields (mean of 2 years).
For 1978/9 and 1979/80 respectively DM production from lucerne was 29% and 19% greater than that from grass/clover. Despite this and greater utilisation (about 40% v 20%), milkfat production on lucerne was similar in 1978/9 (461 v 469 kg/ha) and inferior (469 v 607 kg/ha) in 1979/80, the wetter year. Lower animal performance from lucerne was attributed to poorer winter feeding, shorter lactation length and a reduced fat content of the milk. Under the conditions existing in this study therefore, the extra DM production from lucerne was far outweighed by lower dairy production and higher costs for control of bloat, aphids and weeds, and for winter supplements. On average the gross margins for grass clover were $940/ha/year and for lucerne $710/ha/year.