

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Landowner _____

Establishing Bermudagrass from Seed in Conservation Farming**WHAT IS ESTABLISHING BERMUDAGRASS FROM SEED?**

When in good contact with the soil, bermudagrass, a warm-seasoned perennial, produces above ground runners that root and form crowns of new plants at nodes. It initiates growth in the spring and continues to grow when moisture is adequate until the first heavy frost in the fall. It is primarily a green growing crop; however, livestock do well on reserved winter pasture when supplemental concentrates are fed.

PURPOSES

Pasture, hay, and erosion control.

HOW IT HELPS THE LAND

1. In areas of adaptation, seeding bermudagrass is an economical, fast method of establishing pasture and erosion control cover on medium-textured soils. When used for erosion control, plant in combination with permanent erosion control vegetation.
2. When used as a base grass for an improved tame pasture its rapid growth furnishes good grazing and protects the soil from erosion during the first year.
3. Various types of farm equipment that are commonly used for seeding and fertilizing other crops can be successfully and easily adapted for the planting of bermudagrass seed.
4. Bermudagrass established from seed meets the same basic need and has the same soil requirements as bermudagrass established from rootstock. Seedings are not recommended on clayey soils.

WHERE THE PRACTICE APPLIES

Seeding is generally limited to southeast Oklahoma where it is less likely to winterkill.

Bermudagrass grows well on a wide variety of soils, from clays to coarse sands, provided soil fertility is not a limiting factor. It grows best in deep, productive, sandy loam soils.

WHERE TO GET HELP

For additional information, contact your local Natural Resource Conservation Service or your local Conservation District office.

APPLYING THE PRACTICE

Preparation: Plant on a well-prepared firm seedbed.

If weeds appear before planting time, a light cultivation is desirable to remove competitive vegetation.

Planting Time: The most desirable planting period for unhulled seed is March 1 to June 30, and for hulled seed April 1 to June 30. Seedings that are made after mean daily temperatures reach 65 degrees are the most successful.

Planting Rate: For hulled seed 2 to 3 pounds, unhulled seed 3 to 4 pounds per acre.

*planting in rows are favorable over broadcast, with fertilizer banded under the seed.

Depth of Seed: ¼ to ½ inch.

MAINTAINING THE PRACTICE

FERTILIZER AND LIME: Although bermudagrass often grows without applied fertilizer, substantial amounts are required to produce good quality turf and high yields of quality forage. Local experience and soil test should be used as a guide in recommending amounts to apply. Minimum rate per acre for establishment is usually 15 to 30 pounds of nitrogen, 20 to 40 pounds of phosphate, and 20 to 40 pounds of potash. When seed and fertilizer are mixed together, use powdered or pulverized fertilizer instead of granulated or the pelletized kind in order to secure even distribution of seed.

Light grazing is recommended the first season. It encourages the young runners to "peg down" and makes more prostrate growth. A few weeks of deferment just before frost assures more plant vigor the following growing season and lessens winterkill. The minimum average height of grazing in a planned grazing system is 2 inches as compared to 3 inches for an extended system. When weed control is necessary, mow or use approved chemicals. Adapted legumes can be added after the

bermudagrass has completed at least one growing season.

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