



# Introduced Warm-Season Grass Series

Bahiagrass

Common Bermudagrass

Hybrid Bermudagrass

Dallisgrass

Johnsongrass

Pearl Millet

Crabgrass

Sorghum-sudan

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## Fact Sheet 6 Range and Pasture

# Introduced Warm-Season Grasses of Louisiana

## Fact Sheet

## Bahiagrass

### Description

Bahiagrass (*Paspalum notatum*) is a deep-rooted, long-lived warmseason perennial grass. Bahiagrass is aggressive and once established will resist encroachment after sod has developed. This grass is a prolific seed producer and the seeds are easily spread by cattle or farm equipment to other pastures or hay fields. Two distinctive features can identify bahiagrass. At the base of the plant, the lower sheaths or stems and the lower leaves are somewhat flattened and purple in color. The other distinctive feature is the typical "V-shape" of the inflorescence or seedhead.

Three varieties are recommended in Louisiana.

**Pensacola** bahiagrass is characterized by a long, narrow leaf. It is an excellent seed producer and well adapted to Louisiana climates and to most soils in the state.

**Tifton 9** is a selection of Pensacola bahiagrass. Compared to Pensacola, Tifton 9 has longer leaves and stronger seedling vigor. It is more palatable, and is similar in digestibility and cold tolerance.

**Argentine** bahiagrass is a long, broad-leaved variety that is susceptible to ergot. Argentine has the highest forage quality of the bahiagrass varieties recommended in Louisiana, but it also is the least cold tolerant. It produces fewer seedheads and is slower to establish than other varieties.

### Adaptability

Bahiagrass can tolerate a wide range of soil conditions and is adapted to all soils in Louisiana that have good surface drainage. It is best adapted to soils with a pH of 5.5 to 6.5. It is better adapted to less fertile, sandy, and droughty soils than other perennial grasses. Bahiagrass can also withstand close defoliation.





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## Establishment

Bahiagrass is established by seeding. A firm, smooth, weed-free, seedbed should be prepared for best results. A seeding rate of 15 lbs./acre of pure live seed should be used. Pastures should be planted from April 1st through June 1st in north Louisiana and March 1st through June 1st in south Louisiana. Seed may be planted either by drilling or broadcasting and should be placed at a depth of 1/4 - 1/2 inch. A cultipacker or roller should be used after seeding to firm the soil, conserve moisture, and speed germination. Control annual grasses and weeds by selective grazing, clipping, or spraying. Follow LSU Ag Center recommendations and label requirements if chemicals are used. Bahiagrass will take the entire growing season or seasons to establish. Dormant seeds will germinate during the entire growing season. Therefore, do not evaluate stand success until the end of the first summer after seeding.

## Management

Bahiagrass typically begins growth in March and April. The highest production occurs in May, June and July, but it will continue to grow through October and into November depending on when the first frost occurs. Bahiagrass will become tough, low in quality, and unpalatable if allowed to grow over eight inches. After this it will produce little growth and the forage quality will rapidly decline. Clipping may be required to keep bahiagrass tender and succulent.

In rotational grazing systems, begin grazing bahiagrass when it is about 4 inches high and graze down to a 2-3 inch stubble height. Rotation of all pastures in the system should be completed in 20-26 days. When bahiagrass is grazed continuously, graze down to an average stubble height of 2 inches.



When harvesting bahiagrass for hay the 1st cutting should take place during the boot to bloom stages. Subsequent cuttings should occur every 4 to 5 weeks or when regrowth is 8-10 inches tall. Leave a 2 inch stubble when harvesting for hay

Due to the dense, tough sod that bahiagrass forms, winter annual grasses and legumes may be difficult to establish by overseeding. Harrowing or very light disking will allow seed contact with the soil and aid in the germination of the winter annuals and legumes. Crimson and white clovers are best adapted to be overseeded into bahiagrass sod.

## Uses

Bahiagrass is primarily used for grazing and hay production. It can be used for erosion control, but should be planted with an annual to allow time for bahiagrass to establish.

## Where To Get Help

For more information about bahiagrass, contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office visit the Plant Materials website at: <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov> or <http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov>.

