

## Establishing Cool Season Annual Grasses

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### **Cool Season Annual Grasses Establishment Options:**

	<b>Seeding Rate (lb/ac)</b>	<b>Planting Depth</b>	<b>Months of Use</b>
Ryegrass Only	25-30	0-0.5 in.	Feb to May
Small Grain Only (Oats, Rye, Triticale, Wheat)	80-120	1-1.5 in.	Dec to April
Ryegrass and Small Grain	20-25 ryegrass + 80-120 small grain	See above	Dec to May
Ryegrass and Legume*	15-20 ryegrass + 2/3 of pure stand seeding rate legume	0-0.5 in. (ryegrass) 0-1.0 in. depending on legume	Feb to May

\* For legume establishment see "Forage Legume Management Guide."

### **Planting Date, Method and Fertilization**

1. Prepared Seedbed
  - Take soil test to assess needs of lime, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.
  - Destroy existing vegetation by disking and then rolling (packing) to provide firm seedbed for planting and moisture retention.
  - Phosphorus and/or potash fertilization can be applied before or at time of planting.
  - Plant cool season grasses from mid-September to early October before a good chance for rainfall.
  - Nitrogen fertilization is usually split applied, and depending on soil test recommendations, may require 1 to 3 split applications at 50-60 lbs/ac N. Delay initial N application until after grass emergence.
2. Light Disking (1-2" deep) on sandy soils
  - Provides loose soil to cover seed and reduces summer grass competition.
  - Used on Bermudagrass and Bahiagrass pastures.
  - Summer grass needs to be short (less than 4"; grazing, hay harvest, mowing, etc.).
  - Plant cool season annual grasses 4 to 6 weeks before the average first killing frost, which usually occurs in November.

- Seed are planted with a drill or broadcast followed by some type of pasture drag to cover seed
  - Phosphorus and potash fertilization should be based on soil test recommendations and applied 2 to 3 weeks post emergence.
  - Initial nitrogen fertilizer application should be delayed until after the cool season grass is established and cool temperatures have reduced warm season grass growth.
  - Nitrogen fertilization is dependent on soil test and may be split in 1 to 3 applications of 50-60 lbs/acre.
3. Overseeding or Sodseeding into Undisturbed Sod
- Summer grass needs to be short (less than 4"; grazing, hay harvest, mowing, etc.).
  - Planting date is several weeks later than other planting methods to reduce warm-season grass competition.
  - Requires sod seeder (no-till drill) if planting small grain or may be accomplished with fertilizer truck.
  - Broadcasting into an undisturbed sod is usually limited to annual ryegrass and small seeded clovers (ball, white, etc.).
  - If broadcasting cool season grasses, the seeding rates should be increased 25% to 30%.
  - Initial fertilizer application should be delayed until after the cool season grass is established and cool temperatures have reduced warm season grass growth.
  - Nitrogen fertilization may be split in 1 to 3 applications of 50-60 lbs/acre.
  - Phosphorus and potash fertilization should be based on soil test recommendations.

### **Utilization**

- Best use is by young growing animals (stocker calves, replacement heifers, first calf heifers, creep grazing fall calves.).
- For fall calving cows, limit graze (2 hrs/day or 4 hrs every other day) during winter as a protein and energy supplement. Increase hours/day on pasture as growth rate increases in early spring.
- Can be used for fall or winter calving cows.
- Should NOT use for dry, mature cows due to high costs.

**For more details on legumes see "Forage Legume Management Guide." For more details on winter pastures see "Annual Winter Pastures for East Texas." SCS-2006-05. Or visit our websites at: <http://soilcrop.tamu.edu> or <http://overton.tamu.edu>.**