

DeKalb-Pfizer Makes Late Summer Alfalfa Seeding Recommendations

DEKALB, IL — "Farmers are naturally concerned about maintaining adequate alfalfa acreage production this fall considering the drought stresses, winter injury, and difficulty in getting initial stands established over the last three year period," says Rick Mason, DeKalb-Pfizer Genetics agronomist. The following seeding guidelines are recommended by the company

agronomist.

The first step in late summer alfalfa seeding management is soil sampling. "A soil test will indicate the nutrient requirements for maximum alfalfa production and also indicate whether the soil pH is in the desired 6.5 to 7.5 range," says Mason. Optimum soil test levels for alfalfa production on most soils are: available phosphorous, 40-60

pounds per acre; exchangeable potassium, 300-400 pounds per acre; boron, three pounds per acre; sulfur, 30-40 pounds per acre and magnesium, 100 pounds per acre.

The next step is to select alfalfa varieties with proven yield and quality performance characteristics. "Pest resistance and winter-hardiness ratings are available from seed dealers as well as state

university trial results," states Mason.

Alfalfa seed should be inoculated with effective strains of viable nitrogen-fixing bacteria. Rhizobia bacteria are most specific organisms that provide nearly all the nitrogen needed for plant growth.

According to Mason, a firm seedbed is essential for successful establishment of alfalfa. A firm seedbed allows an imprint of your heel and shoe sole, but not the arch.

The agronomist recommends the following seeding rates: 12 to 15 pounds per acre with a companion crop or 15 to 18 pounds when direct (clear) seeding is recommended. On heavy soils with good moisture holding capacity, alfalfa should be planted no more than 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep. On very sandy soils that dry quickly near the surface, increase planting depth to 1 to 1 1/2 inches. Twenty to 30 plants per square foot are considered an optimum seeding year stand.

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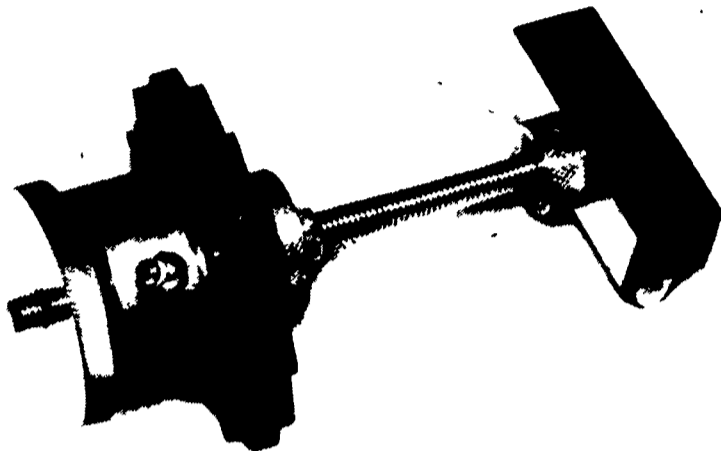
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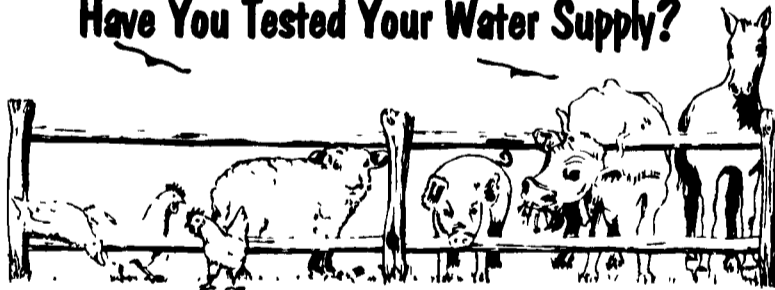
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