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ety/species is well adapted, stands can be lost or severely reduced allowing native plants to invade. Intruders such as crabgrass, quackgrass, and many broadleaf weeds for example, can suppress or even eliminate desirable species.

With the advent of true grazing tolerant alfalfa varieties, (the first of which was Alfagraze), these problems are greatly reduced and stands do persist better than with conventional hay type varieties. Research by Dr. Carl Hoveland of the University of Georgia showed that when pasturing grazing tolerant alfalfa continuously through the summer months, native grasses did intrude; (for him, the grass was bermudagrass). While the grazing-tolerant alfalfa did survive and bounce back, he found, such management reduced yields and allowed unwanted weed invasion. He further found that by increasing fertility levels with phosphate and potash and allowing sufficient recovery time to form a generous canopy, this alfalfa again became the predominant species. Conventional hay types did not recover nearly as well. He also observed that when continuous grazing is practiced, 7 to 8 inches of growth should be maintained during the grazing season.

What about bloat? This is a question that is often asked by those who are anxious to try alfalfa as a grazing crop for the first time. Is alfalfa a potential culprit? Yes it is and so are many other legumes, especially white clovers (including ladina types). Farmers have found ways to manage to keep the potential problems in check. Here are some of the best prevention methods:

- Pre-fill hungry (emaciated) animals with dry hay and/or bulk feed.
- Put animals onto alfalfa pastures for snort periods initially. The time interval on the pasture can be increased day to day as they adjust to the forage.
- Always keep dry hay available

during grazing.

- Watch and be prepared to move animals on cool-wet days.

- Lush forage greatly increases consumption thus increases bloat potential.

- Grow alfalfa with compatible/adapted grasses. Orchardgrass seems best for this area.

- Feed bloat inhibitors. Poloxolene used according to recommendations prior to and during grazing reduces bloat.

Summary

Growing alfalfa specifically for grazing is fairly new. For years, farmers have grazed remnant alfalfa fields just before termination (a year or so before moving back to crop rotation) and under drought stricken conditions when yields did not justify haying costs. Some have even grazed hay-type alfalfa fields following the same guidelines as for hay and silage with mixed, usually disappointing stand persistent results. The advent of grazing tolerant varieties has vitalized interest in growing this crop for grazing. Why and who are these folks?

- Dairymen who want to cut milk production costs are using it more each year.

- Beef stocker operators who want quality feed and higher summer gains find they can produce over 2 pounds of day gain compared to about 1 pound from grass and 1.5-1.8 from grass and clovers. With other legumes, persistence and yield are problems.

- Beef cow-calf producers who want better conception rates, higher calf weaning weights and better carrying capacity with summer production reliability are at last realizing these benefits.

- Sheep producers who want a reliable source of high quality forage for finishing lambs have at last found an answer.

- This legume, when grown in pastures, increases meat and milk production.

Since so many leading farmers have moved to grazing, we expect to

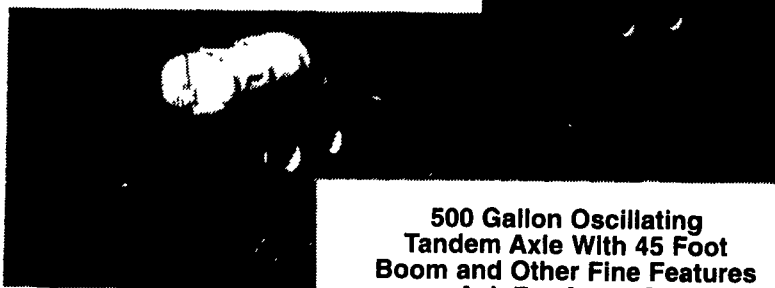


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see a decided growth in the acreage of alfalfa for grazing. There is no reason to think otherwise. Farming has continuous need for more efficiency and net income and grazing alfalfa is a surefire way to accomplish that from farming. The seed to plant this program is already available and will get better through the years. New genetic breakthroughs are in the works, some available even now. Don't be at all surprised to see the highest yielding varieties in official trials, called multipurpose varieties, that are more persistent, and suitable for both grazing and mechanical harvest as hay and silage.

Seeding Alfalfa No-Till

Farmers are constantly looking for a less-expensive, easier, more reliable way to establish alfalfa. With the release of successful grazing tolerant alfalfa, more farmers are adding alfalfa to their pastures and looking for ways to do this with minimum costs and less chance of water erosion damage. No-till does not mean no-nothing. It simply means as was stated in the original Pasture Renovation Program outlined and defined by the American Society of Agronomy as "The improvement of a pasture by partial destruction of the sod, plus liming, fertilizing, and seeding as may be required to establish or re-establish desirable forage plants without an intervening crop." from the mid 1950s until the present, the keys to successful pasture improvement through minimum or no-till are the same. The only change is substituting chemicals for mechanical tillage and the development and distribution of no-till drills that properly place seed in the soil for best emergence and survival.

Three years ago, Dr. Harlan White, emeritus professor and former forage specialist at VPPI (Virginia) an I decided it was time we put together a no-till publication on seeding alfalfa no-till for distribution throughout America.

With our experience developing the process and putting it into massive use on farms in Virginia and Kentucky, we doubted that anyone could challenge our findings, writings, ad reports. So we wrote it and ABI Alfalfa published and distributed it. The title is "No-Till Alfalfa: Seeding For Success."

Seeding alfalfa no-till pastures on your farm:

Establishing a strong stand can be challenging especially in pastures that are steep and subject to erosion and moisture stress. Conventional tillage in these conditions is a serious threat to soil conservation and stand establishment. Procedures developed through research and refined through large-scale farmer adoption have made no-till seeding practical and widely adopted in many areas of the United States.

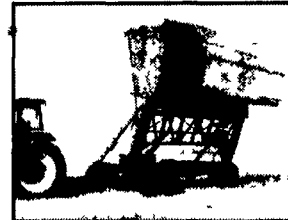
Two key components helping no-till alfalfa succeed (as we have already pointed out) are herbicides and drills. The use of short-duration herbicides (Gramoxone and Roundup) and development of improved no-till seeding drills have made this both practical and an easier system of seeding.

Advantages of no-till over conventional seeding include:

- More soil saved (less erosion)
- Lower costs
- Less time involved in seedbed preparation and seeding
- Less labor

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