



(Continued from Page 12)

- More soil moisture saved
- More timely seeding

To make this program all come together and be successful and grow profitable great stand of alfalfa, a grower should/must: 1. Plan head-select the field to be seeded at least a year before seeding. 2. Seed on well drained soil. 3. Seed in spring after winter soil-frost melt or in late summer at least six weeks prior to historic first-killing-frost date. 4. Test soil and apply needed lime and fertilizer; (lime a year ahead of seeding). Do not use nitrogen in no-till! 5. Control plant competition before and after seeding. 6. Seed at 15 to 20 pounds per acre at 1/4 to 1/2 inch depth; (perhaps up to 3/4-inch depth on sandy soils). 7. Scout often and control insects.

What about alfalfa seedling vigor? Alfalfa, once established, is a tough and persistent legume. But young seedlings can be very vulnerable. Competition with grass, broadleaf weeds, and grassy weeds, as well as resident legumes may cause many new seedlings to become crowded or smothered during early establishment. Control of existing plants prior to seeding is a must. Short-residual herbicides offer very effective broad-spectrum weed control before and after establishment.

Where no-till works best is in

older perennial cool season grass sods, following row crops and residues from small grain crops — never into an old, thinning alfalfa stand.

Techniques for seeding into perennial cool season grass sods:

Spring Seeding:

Reduce the competition from existing plants with appropriate herbicides. Decide prior to seeding whether to eliminate all or a portion of the sod and modify applications accordingly. Since errors in seed placement are a primary cause of alfalfa stand failure, use only no-till drills designed for seeding into sod and adjust them to your soil and moisture conditions.

To eliminate as much of the sod as possible, mow or graze the field in early autumn and while it is still green, apply 1 quart of Gramoxone, or 1-2 quarts of Roundup per acre in 20+ gallons of water. In early spring, a follow-up application of 1 pint of Gramoxone may be used to control weeds and surviving old pasture growth. No-till seed in early spring. (Note, when using Gramoxone, always include the recom-

mended rate of surfactant for best control).

To maintain a portion of the sod, graze or mow closely in early autumn and apply 1 quart of Gramoxone or 1 to 2 quarts of Roundup per acre. A follow-up spring application of 1 pint of Gramoxone is necessary only if winter weeds are a threat.

In areas where perennial broadleaf weeds such as dock, horse nettle, thistles, or other persistent weeds are present, apply 2,4-D and Banvel at locally recommended rates and dates.

Late summer seeding (a new technique developed in Virginia) has proven to be very successful. (The summer smother-crop, used in Virginia, may need to be amended to fit Pennsylvania conditions). This is the way it is done: Graze or mow the existing cover by late spring. Apply 1 quart of Gramoxone or 2 quarts of Roundup in 20+ gallons of water, per acre. No-till seed 20 to 25 pounds per acre of foxtail (German) millet per acre. Harvest the millet for hay or silage in 7 to 8 weeks (at early head stage). If weeds or other plants survive the spring herbicide and summer smother-crop, apply one pint of Gramoxone per acre for fall cleanup. Seed alfalfa no-till at 15 to 20 pounds per acre at least six weeks ahead of historic freeze date. (Note: whatever summer smother-crop is used, be sure to pick one that is terminal at harvest with no regrowth to compete with new alfalfa seedlings).

No-till seedings follow row crops:

Following corn, (harvested as grain or silage), seed an adapted winter small grain for ground cover. If triazine herbicides (atrazine/simazine) were used in crop production, their residual effects can injure legumes planted the following spring so stick to labeled recommendations for best results. If triazines were used, disking to dilute the concentration of the residue will surely help. The following spring, apply 1-2 pints of Gramoxone in 20+ gallons of water per acre on the small grain when it is 4-6 inches tall. No-till seed 15 to 20 pounds of alfalfa immediately. Should small grain regrowth occur (5-6 inches), mow just above the alfalfa or graze to help prevent early smothering.

Alfalfa also may be seeded without tillage into standing small grain (8-10 inches tall) prior to harvest as silage. Rye harvested as silage in the boot stage will usually produce regrowth and must be mowed or chemically controlled with Poast at 4-6 inches of growth. Winter barley, (where adapted) and winter wheat, when cut in the dough stage helps reduce regrowth potential. In some cases however, some help may be needed from Poast.

When small grain silage is made before the boot stage, wait 5-10 days for regrowth and apply 1 pint of Gramoxone in 20+ gallons of water per acre prior to seeding alfalfa.

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