

Crazy About Clovers

Berks County Extension

Here's a rundown on some of the clover species that you have seen offered in sales literature or have read about in magazines.

PERENNIALS

Alsike Clover

Alsike is intermediate between red and white clover. It was considered a hybrid, but is now considered its own species. If you look at grass lawns, where the dutch white clover is growing, you probably can find alsike clover. Look for flowers that vary in color from white to pink. The leaflets do not have the white "v" on them. Its yield performance is considered less than red clover. It is usually seeded with red clover in a bluegrass pasture mix. Just like red clover, it does not last long, but readily reseeds itself. It is usually recommended on sites that are wet and acid (tolerates a pH as low as 5.5).

Alyceclover

Alyceclover is a legume adapted to tropical or subtropical climates. It is not considered a "true" clover. It would not be recommended for use in this area because of its intolerance to frost and its moisture needs.

"Alice" White Clover

Not to be confused with the above clover! Alice is the variety name of Ladino white clover. These types have been selected for their larger, more erect leaves. The leaves are oriented to capture more sunlight than the native "dutch" clovers you see in closely grazed pastures or lawns.

Kura Clover

There is renewed interest in Kura clover because of its growth habit. It produces stolons, just like white clover but the stolons are underneath the ground. This enables it to have greater winter and drought hardiness. It is reported to be difficult to estab-

lish. Kura clover has been included in trials here in Pennsylvania with not a lot of success. It also must be inoculated. Of all the new species for pastures, some research attention has been done to learn more about its growing habits.

Red Clover

Most widely grown of all the clovers. Although a perennial in most pastures, it will behave as a biennial. This is due to its intolerance of prolonged drought and harsh winters. Producers will have to overseed red clovers to keep them productive in pastures.

ANNUALS

Berseem Clover

Berseem is classified as an annual. It is shallow rooted and has yellow flowers. It is adapted more to growing in southern climates. If grown in our region, it is used primarily as a summer annual cover crop for soil building purposes. It is readily killed off in winter.



Industry News

Harvest time presents growers with a great opportunity to impact forage quality. Three proven tactics used by growers to improve silage quality are kernel processing, inoculant usage, and silo segregation, according to Dr. Karl Nestor, senior animal nutritionist, Mycogen Seeds.

Kernel Processing

Kernel processing occurs when a whole corn plant is run through a roller mill. This practice breaks down the corn kernels and shreds the plant. In a summary of research studies, by Dr. Mike Hutjens from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, results have shown -1.1 to 3.7 pounds of milk production gained, with the average increased milk production of 1.1

pounds. Processing allows producers to chop silage at a longer theoretical chop length, which improves the level of fiber in the ration, resulting in a better-utilized corn plant.

Inoculant Usage

Silage inoculants increase the speed of fermentation, decreasing nutrient loss in the silo. "I recommend using bacterial inoculants, due to safety and proven results," Nestor said. "And they only cost about \$1 per ton of silage."

Nestor advises using an inoculant that is proven through independent research.

Silo Segregation

By separating silage into smaller silos, growers can keep higher-quality silage apart from the rest. This allows producers to feed their

highest-quality silage to cattle who need it the most, such as the transition cows or the high-producing group.

"High-producing cows are the most limited by rumen fill and can benefit from a forage that is digested faster in the rumen and allows for greater feed intake," said Nestor.

While this practice may not be feasible for some farms due to space limitations, it should still be considered even if on a small scale.

"Incorporating these three management techniques can significantly improve forage quality and enhance the dairy's overall forage program," Nestor said.

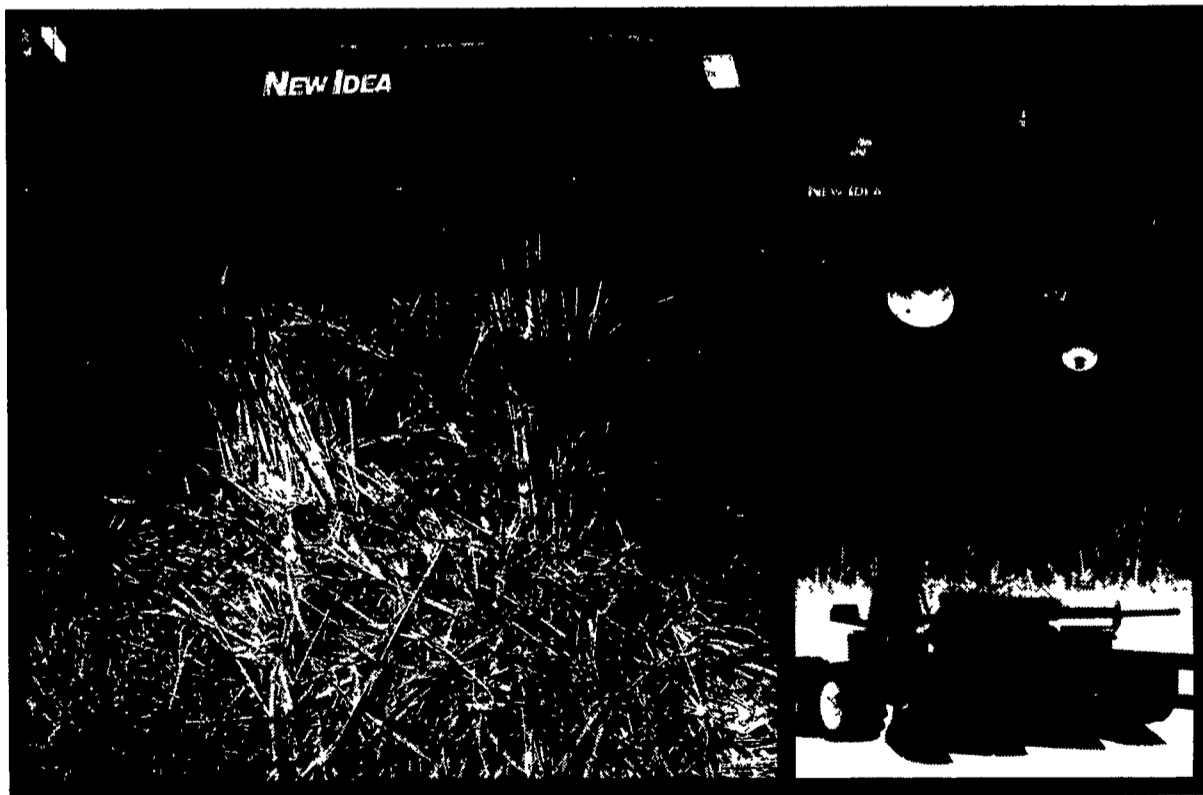
— Mycogen Seeds

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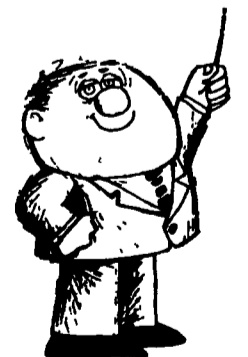
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