DRYLAND PASTURE FROM OLD CROPLAND

Farm Advisors
Lin V. Maxwell Norman H. Macleod

THE JOB

1. Prepare a seedbed
2. Select a seed mixture
3. Seed at the right time
4. Good pasture management

IS GRASS YOUR OBJECTIVE?

Seeding cropland to grasses and legumes to provide pasture for beef cattle or other livestock is a common practice in the county. Land which may be marginal for growing grain, beans, or other crops can often be converted profitably. This saves labor, machinery, and other cultural costs. It applies especially to land which is subject to erosion. A successful pasture requires the same care and attention to details as any other crops you might plant.

LAND PREPARATION AND SEEDING

Two methods are in common use. If the land is comparatively free of weeds, it is disked and the seed drilled in the fall. Common weeds such as mustard, radish, and annual grasses if present, may give the new plants too much competition. If this will be a problem, the alternate method is to disk the land in late winter or early spring to conserve the moisture. Rework the land in April or early May and seed to sudangrass. Graze the sudan during the summer and drill the grass seed directly into the sudan stubble in the fall. Drilling is the better method in either case. Airplane seeding can be used if the seeding is followed by a light harrowing or rolling.

MANAGING THE NEW SEEDING

Livestock should be allowed to grazedown any volunteer crop of native annuals that may come rapidly in the spring. Clipping two or more times with a mower can be done in place of grazing.* Heavy stocking to graze the area rapidly is better than using fewer animals over a long period. Remove all animals by late April so as to allow the seeded plants to mature a new seed crop. Start grazing again when the plants have matured seed. This late summer grazing will help scatter the seed and trample it into the soil.

*Note: Do not clip if Hardinggrass is past boot stage.

SUGGESTED MIXTURES

Loam and Clay Soils

Hardinggrass	2 lbs.
Smilo	2
Annual ryegrass	½
Perennial ryegrass	1½
Palestine orchardgrass	1
Alfalfa or clovers	3
Total	10 lbs.

OR

Hardinggrass	3 lbs.
Smilo	1
Annual ryegrass	½
Perennial ryegrass	2
Palestine orchardgrass	1½
Alfalfa or clovers	2
Total	10 lbs.

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SUGGESTED MIXTURES (continued)

Loam and Clay Soils (continued)

OR

Hardinggrass	4 lbs.
Smilo	1
Annual ryegrass	½
Perennial ryegrass	1½
Alfalfa or clovers	3
Total	10 lbs.

Sand and Sandy Soils

Veldtgrass	4 lbs.
Lana vetch or Auburn Woollypod vetch	6
Total	10 lbs.

OR

Veldtgrass	4 lbs.

FERTILIZATION

Most all land in the county which has been used for growing grain or other crops for a number of years is deficient in nitrogen. Forty to sixty pounds of actual nitrogen applied before fall rains will improve growth. Any type of nitrogen fertilizer can be used.

Most soils in the county contain adequate phosphate; however, the lighter, sandy soils are sometimes deficient. In these, a combination nitrogen-and-phosphate fertilizer is needed. Twenty to thirty pounds of phosphorus should be applied. Several such combination fertilizers are available.

Sulfur or potash are almost never lacking in our Santa Barbara County soils.

The fertilizer industry is changing to a new method of expressing phosphorus content. This will be the same as has been used for nitrogen for some years; i.e., Direct, elemental phosphorus (P), rather than phosphoric acid (P_2O_5), will be the new method of expressing this phosphorus content of fertilizers; therefore, eventually, the familiar 16-20-0 would become 16-9-0. The same thing is true for potassium which will be expressed as the element (K) rather than the oxide (K_2O). In order to convert from one expression to the other, these formulae can be used:

$$P \times 2.3 = P_2O_5$$

$$K \times 1.2 = K_2O$$

LVM/NHM:ek
12-21-67/100c

Range & Pasture

Range & Dryland Pasture

general

M-16

Out of print

BRUSHLAND CONVERSION

Reseeding Brush & Grassland

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What You Have To Do

1. Prepare a seedbed
2. Select a seed mixture
3. Seed at the right time
4. Good Range Management

SEEDBED PREPARATION

As with any crop, a range cannot be reseeded successfully unless you have a proper seedbed. Rangeland that is covered with brush and grass needs clearing by controlled burning or by mechanical means. Either method can be used to provide this seedbed.

Burned areas that were previously covered with mixed grass and brush or straight grass generally are already well supplied with seed and any seed added will have strong competition. Annual ryegrass can be seeded to take over in any bare areas.

In areas that were heavily covered with brush, the fire is hot enough to destroy the grass seed that might have been in the soil. Here is where seeding is essential.

WHAT TO SEED

Your choice is between a cheaper annual mixture and a mixture of perennial grasses and legumes. The annual grasses such as ryegrass provide fast cover and more feed the first year. A perennial seeding provides a more permanent cover from the second and third year on.

Perennials do well along the coast and in parts of the county where rainfall is above 16 inches. Annual seeding (ryegrass, soft chess, bur clover) is about the only choice in areas where seasonal rainfall is under ten inches. The exception is perennial veldtgrass which will grow in our sandy type soils even with limited rainfall.

SEEDING

Early fall seedings are often the most successful. You are taking a gamble on late rains with late winter and spring seeding. Burned areas should be seeded before the ashes have been rained on. Airplane seeding is the practical method over rough terrain. Drilling is best and is worth the extra cost in the flatter areas with better soils.

MANAGEMENT IS IMPORTANT

Livestock should not be allowed to pasture the reseeded area during the first year until all grasses have produced seed. When seed is mature, grazing is beneficial as livestock help scatter the seed.

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SUGGESTED SEED MIXTURES (Per Acre)

Annual Grass Seedings

Mixture #1 - Annual ryegrass
5-10 lbs.

Mixture #2 - Annual ryegrass
5 lbs.
Soft chess
(Blando brome)
1-2 lbs.

Notes

Soft chess is more expensive than ryegrass, however, it will remain in the stand year after year. Ryegrass is seldom found, as a stand, after three to five years.

Cereal Grain

On land that has been mechanically cleared of brush, a crop of oats or barley can be grown to establish a forage or grass cover. Many ranchers have done this either for pasture above or to grow it as a crop before using the land for pasture. Steepness of the land, price of grain or hay would affect the utilization decision.

Grass Legume Seedings

Mixture #1 -	Annual ryegrass	4 lbs.
	Bur clover	4 lbs.
	Total	8 lbs.

Note: Alfalfa or other clovers can be substituted.

Mixture #2	Lana vetch or Auburn woollypod vetch	8 lbs.

Mixture #3	Lana vetch or Auburn woollypod vetch	4 lbs.
	Annual ryegrass	4 lbs.
	Total	8 lbs.

Mixture #4	Lana vetch or Auburn woollypod vetch	4 lbs.
	Hardinggrass	2 lbs.
	Annual ryegrass	2 lbs.
	Total	8 lbs.

Perennial Grass Seedings

Mixture #1 (Special)	
Hardinggrass	3 lbs.
Smilo	1½
Annual ryegrass	2
Perennial ryegrass	1½
Veldtgrass	½
Palestine orchard grass	1
Annual clover	1
Total	10½ lbs.

Notes

Plantings made by farm advisors and ranchers have shown this to be a satisfactory seeding.

The ½ pound of veldtgrass should be included only if the soil is sandy.

Mixture #2 (Regular)	
Hardinggrass	3 lbs.
Smilo	1½
Annual ryegrass	½
Perennial ryegrass	2
Veldtgrass	½
Palestine orchard grass	2
Annual clover	1
Total	10½ lbs.

Notes

This mixture has been used extensively during the past few years. The cover the first year is not as good as that obtained by the mixture suggested above.

Mixture #3	
Hardinggrass	2 lbs.
Smilo	1
Annual ryegrass	½
Perennial ryegrass	1
Veldtgrass	½
Palestine orchard grass	1½
Annual clover	1
Total	7½ lbs.

This lighter seeding can be used when the ten pounds per acre rate is not desired. It usually results in less of a stand the first year, however, in following years it performs about the same as the heavier seeding.

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