

GRASS AND LEGUME SEEDING PRACTICES
FOR
SIERRA AND PLUMAS COUNTIES

ALTON YOUNG
FARM ADVISOR
PLUMAS AND SIERRA COUNTIES
QUINCY, CALIFORNIA

Forward

Many acres of old meadow land in the various valleys of Plumas and Sierra Counties are in need of renovation. Some soils in Sierra Valley now covered with sage brush can be placed in production for either hay or pasture. The following recommendations are made following three years of testing many varieties of grasses and legumes for this area.

Preparation of Soil

Old Meadow Land

Before a successful stand of new grass can be obtained it is necessary to eliminate old sod. This can be done by fall plowing and heavy discing. The land should then be planted to a grain crop for one year at least to allow the sod to rot and the ground to settle and pack. If the land is to be irrigated it will pay to level in order to get better use of the water. A crop of oat hay using 50% of oats per acre can be planted the first year on irrigated land. Sage brush lands will have to be pretty well clear of brush and roots to obtain a good stand and to eliminate the chance of raking brush up with the hay produced.

Seeding

The land may be disced lightly, followed by cultipacking. Following seeding, the ground should then be cultipacked again. The seed should be put in during March or early April. Late fall seeding on dry land probably will be successful if carefully done. The worst failures in grass and legume seedings are always found on loose seed beds.

On irrigated land alfalfa or clover seed can be broadcast ahead of the drill by pulling the tubes from this seeder attachment.

If both grass and legumes are drilled the grass should be drilled in first since grass seeds should usually be placed 1" deep. Alfalfa or clover should be drilled $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep.

On dry land it is a better practice to drill both alfalfa and grass. Alternate openings in the drill should be stopped up to save seed. Usually the grass seed is placed in the grain hopper and the alfalfa in the seeder attachment on the front of the drill. Cross seeding the alfalfa after the grass is drilled is better than trying to drill it in the same directions as the grass.

Broadcasting, especially on dry land, is a waste of seed. In many cases, especially with grasses, a complete failure will result.

Alfalfa alone on dry land can be drilled at rates as low as 5 to 6 lbs. per acre with success, particularly in Sierra Valley if alternate rows in the drill are stopped up.

Seed Mixtures - Hay or Pasture

Irrigated Land American and Indian Valley

- 4# Alsike Clover or Big Trefoil
- 4# Smooth Brome
- 3# Perennial Rye
- 3# Tall Fescue

Pasture

- 2# Alsike Clover or Pig Trefoil
- 2# Red Clover
- 3# Smooth Brome
- 3# Orchard Grass
- 2# Timothy
- 2# Tall Fescue

Dry Land

- 4# Alfalfa - Ladak
- 10# Smooth Brome

or

- 4# Alfalfa - Ladak
- 5# Smooth Brome
- 5# Tall Oat Grass

or

- 4# Alfalfa - Ladak
- 4# Smooth Brome
- 3# Tall Oat
- 3# Perennial Rye

In some cases on dry land in Sierra Valley it will pay to allow the ground to lie fallow one season to accumulate an additional moisture supply.

Pasturing

It is unwise to pasture newly seeded land heavily. On dry land it is not advisable to pasture at all the first year. The plants must be allowed to store up as much plant food as possible.

Tough Sod Lands

A heavy roto-tiller operated two directions on wire grass and slough grass sod seems to be the best answer in preparing these lands for reseeding. The ground should be plowed following the roto-tiller to turn under the sod. A crop of oats the first year or so will pay for the operation. Reseeding can follow the grain when the ground has become packed again.

It is usually not advisable to plant alfalfa on lands which have a low water table in the fall and a high water table in the spring. Grimm Alfalfa will be more apt to live longer on these lands. Grimm has a branching root system rather than a long tap root.

Call the office for advice on special lands.