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Tips for Small Grain Seeding

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UNIVERSITY of KENTUCKY • COLLEGE of AGRICULTURE

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TIPS FOR SMALL GRAIN SEEDING

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1. TEST YOUR SOIL AND SUPPLY THE SUGGESTED LIMING AND FERTILIZER MATERIALS. A soil test is the first step to profitable small grain production. A pH of 6.0 to 6.5 is best, and nitrogen should be applied both in the fall and spring. If your small grains are part of a double cropping system the P and K requirements for both crops should be applied in the fall.

2. PROPER SEEDBED PREPARATION. The seedbed should be shallow, fairly smooth, and firm. A properly prepared seedbed will permit uniformity of seeding depth. Disking to a depth of 2 to 4 inches is usually all that is necessary when following other row crops.

3. PROPER SEEDING DEPTH AND SEEDING RATE. Seeding depth is important because small grains need strong root systems at the proper depth to withstand winter "heaving" of the soil. Seed should be planted from 1 to 2 inches deep, depending on soil and moisture conditions.

| | Seeding Rate Per Acre | |
|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| | For grain | For forage |
| Wheat and Rye | 1 - 1½ bushels | 2 - 2½ bushels |
| Barley | 1½ - 2 bushels | 3 bushels |
| Oats | 2 - 3 bushels | 3½ bushels |

4. SEED SOURCE AND VARIETY SELECTION. Good stands are the result of planting good seed. Choose seed that is:

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| True to variety | Free from weed seeds and crop mixtures |
| Highly germinative (90% or better) | Chemically treated |

Planting certified seed is the surest way to obtain these qualities.

| | <u>Varieties</u> | | <u>Varieties</u> |
|--------|--|----------------------------|---|
| Wheat | Arthur, Benhur Blueboy, Knox 62 Monon, Redcoat | Oats, Spring Winter | Brave Compact Norline Walken |
| Barley | Barsoy, Knob Harrison, Dayton Jefferson | Rye | Balbo |

5. SEEDING DATE. Small grains often fail because they are seeded too late. Seeding should be early enough to establish a good root system before a heavy freeze.

Recommended Seeding Dates

| | <u>For grain</u> | <u>For forage</u> |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Wheat | Oct. 1 - 20 | Sept. 15 - Oct. 1 |
| Barley | Sept. 15 - Oct. 10 | Sept. 1 - 20 |
| Oats, Winter | Sept. 15 - Oct. 10 | Sept. 1 - 20 |
| Spring | Feb. 15 - Mar. 15 | |
| Rye | Oct. 1 - 15 | Sept. 1 - 30 |

6. AERIAL SEEDING OF SMALL GRAINS. Seeding rates should be increased by 30 to 50 percent for aerial seeding. The ideal time for aerial seeding in soybeans is just before the big lower leaves of the plants fall. Barley, oats, and rye should be planted in September and wheat seedings completed in October.

7. DOUBLE CROPPING. Use your small grains for grain or forage and follow with a second crop such as corn, soybeans, or grain sorghum. Selection of the earliest maturing varieties is most important in a double cropping system. Apply the necessary requirements of P and K for both crops in the fall.

8. DISEASE CONTROL. The major diseases in small grains are the smuts and rusts. If smuts have been a problem, planting certified seed is the best way to control this disease. Rusts are most easily controlled by growing resistant varieties.