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# Practices to Increase Grass Seed Yields Ky. 31 Fescue, Orchardgrass and Ky. Bluegrass

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# AGRONOMY NOTES

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## PRACTICES TO INCREASE GRASS SEED YIELDS KY. 31 FESCUE, ORCHARDGRASS AND KY. BLUEGRASS

Grass seed is a specialized crop in Kentucky. High per acre seed yields can be obtained by using the following suggestions that are made from research findings by the University of Kentucky Agronomy Department.

Ky. 31 fescue: Mow following seed harvest, remove excess growth, and graze moderately until early March. The pH level should be maintained between 6.0 and 7.0 and the phosphate and potash should be maintained at medium to high levels, (preferably based on soil test). Topdress with 60 lbs. of nitrogen during December. Later applications until March 1, give satisfactory yields but are not as high as the December application. Nitrogen applied at this rate after March 15 causes lodging and excessive vegetative growth-thus lowered seed yields.

Orchardgrass: Mow following seed harvest, remove excess growth, and graze moderately until growth stops in the fall. No more grazing should be done until after seed harvest the following year. Maintain a pH level of 6.0 - 7.0 and medium to high levels of phosphate and potash, (preferably based on a soil test). Apply 40 to 60 pounds of nitrogen February 15 - March 15. Earlier applications (before February 15) will allow moderate leaching - later than March 15 application encourages vegetative growth and lodging - thus lowered yields.

Ky. bluegrass: Mow following seed harvest and remove excess growth. Graze moderately until growth stops in the fall and do not graze again until after the seed is harvested. Maintain a pH level of 6.0 - 7.0 and medium to high levels of phosphate and potash (preferably based on soil test). Nitrogen should be applied as a split application: 33 lbs. nitrogen, November 20 - December 10, and 33 lbs. nitrogen again February 20 - March 10. If a single application is made, use 30-40 lbs. of nitrogen about February 20 - March 10. The single application in the spring will usually produce about 30% less seed than the split application.

When nitrogen is applied in the system suggested above, seed yields are increased, but the quality of pasture and hay is reduced because legumes will more than likely be driven out due to competition from the grass treated with nitrogen. However, the production of grass for pasture will be increased more than enough to pay for the cost of the nitrogen and applications; and the increased seed yield becomes profit.

R. C. Buckner

Paul Burrus, II

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