

Management of Annual and Italian Ryegrasses as a Double Crop

Dates are for SE PA and should be adjusted to local area.

- Seeding Dates:** Mid August to end of September. For a November harvest, plant prior to September 7. If not planning a fall harvest, delay seeding to around Sept. 20th. In many years, can be planted as late as mid-October.
- Seeding Rates:** 30-45 lb/acre (use higher rates for diploid varieties)
25 to 30 lbs if seeded with a small grain.
- Seeding Methods:** Ryegrass seed is smaller than small grains. Plant shallow with good seed to soil contact.
a) Conventional: Broadcast seed followed by culti-packer or Brillion Seeder.
b) Light disking followed by surface broadcast seeding and culti-packer.
c) Drill: Seeding depth ¼". If soil conditions are dry, can be seeded up to ½ inch. No deeper!
- Nitrogen Fertilization:** 50 lbs at planting (can use manure)
50 lbs March during green up.
50 lbs after each machine harvest or 2 grazing cycles.
- Fall Management:** Excessive fall growth (greater than 10 inches) should be harvested, grazed or clipped to 4".
- Silage Harvest Dates:** Nov., mid-April, early May, and late May if not replanting quickly into alternative crop. Silage should be made when crop is about 15 to 20 inches or if coming into boot stage. Protein begins to drop after heading but not as severely as a small grain. Italian varieties typically have the ability to be productive for 2 plus years.
- Crop Rotation:** Ryegrass should be either moldboard plowed or sprayed with a minimum of 2 qt of glyphosate (Roundup) per acre to kill the plant. If not controlled, it may compete with the next crop. Annual and Italian Ryegrass can become a serious weed in small grains and is not recommended where small grains are grown for grain harvest. Paraquat (Gramoxone); chiseling or heavy disking will NOT control ryegrass.
- Grazing Dates:** When plants reach 6 to 10". Under good growing conditions, the first grazing will be ready in approximately six weeks for late summer seedings. During the spring a rotation of 10 to 14 days is typical.