

# Frost Seeding Suitability

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Pasture

Cover Crops

Turf

Wildlife

## Reasons to Frost Seed

Pastures can be significantly improved with the addition of frost seeding. With the exception of weed control and fertility management, frost seeding is the most beneficial management decision for improving pasture productivity. Legumes and grasses can be successfully seeded in late winter with low labor and equipment requirements. Frost seeding is accomplished by broadcasting seed onto the soil surface without needing herbicides, expensive equipment, or tillage.

## Factors for Frost Seeding Success:

- Timing of frost seeding is critical:
  - Typically late February & early March
  - Freezing and thawing is needed to provide good seed soil contact.
  - Fall grazing will help by removing residues and exposes soil.
- Frost seeding is more difficult in sod-forming grasses like bluegrass and brome.
  - Open soil is needed for seed contact.



## Managing Newly Frost Seeded Pastures

New seedlings need reduced competition from companion plants and weeds. Frost seeded pastures need to be grazed on a timely basis during the spring and early summer to allow light penetration into the forage canopy. Don't apply nitrogen fertilizers to frost seeded pastures since this may cause grasses to out compete legumes and reduce chances of successful establishment. Phosphorus, potassium fertility and proper pH are necessary for legume establishment.

## Choosing Species to Frost Seed

Both legumes and grasses can be frost seeded. Normally legumes establish easier than grasses. Smaller seeded grasses establish easier than large seeded grasses. Red clover and Ladino are the easiest to

<u>Legumes:</u>	<i>Rate Seeded Alone</i>	<i>Mixture:</i>	<b>Establishment Ease (Easy or Difficult)</b>
Red Clover	4-8 lbs./A	3-4 lbs./A	E
Ladino Clover	2-3 lbs./A	1-2 lbs./A	E
Alfalfa	5-8 lbs./A	3-4 lbs./A	D
Birdsfoot Trefoil	4-6 lbs./A	2-3 lbs./A	D
<u>Grasses:</u>			<b>Smaller Seeded Species Work Best!</b>
Orchardgrass	3-4 lbs./A	1-2 lbs./A	
Ryegrass (Per./An.)	8-10 lbs./A	2-3 lbs./A	
Tall Fescue	6-8 lbs./A	2-3 lbs./A	

establish!

For producers looking for products that are short term, consider Italian ryegrass and Frosty clover as they can help stretch a field for an additional season at a lower cost than a perennial seeding!

