



Converting to Pasture or Hay— Forage Seeding Mixtures

SUMMARY

• **Renovation may require destroying existing vegetation and reseeding.**

• **Interseeding and frost seeding are options.**

This bulletin is part of a series to help CRP contract holders assess the land-use options available to them when the contracts expire.

Complete renovation involves the complete destruction of the existing CRP vegetation and reseeding a more desirable mixture of forage legumes and/or grasses. Where the existing CRP grass is satisfactory, less drastic methods of improving the productivity and nutritive value can be accomplished by interseeding or frost seeding. Seed recommendations for interseeding and frost seeding are referenced in Iowa State University Extension publications *Interseeding and No Till Pasture Renovation*, Pm 1097, and *Improving Pasture by Frost Seeding*, Pm 856.

The selection of grasses and legumes is influenced by factors such as average rainfall, soil drainage, erosion hazard, soil pH level, nutrient supply, intended use(s) of the stand, and the length of stand life that fits your needs. Different varieties are available of each type of grass or legume, each having slightly

different traits. A good variety should be a top yielder, have sufficient winterhardiness for your location, and be resistant to the array of plant diseases present in your fields.

Mixtures of legumes and grasses often give the best overall performance for pasture and multi-use hay/pasture meadows. Yields tend to be greater with mixtures than with either a grass or legume alone. Mixtures of two or three well-chosen legumes or grasses are usually more desirable than mixtures that include five or six. Each selected grass and legume in the mixture should have a specific purpose.

Table 1 provides a list of the most frequently used forage seed mixtures in Iowa. It contains mixtures for specific use situations and those most appropriate for sites where soil drainage or other characteristics may limit success.

Table 1. Forage Seed Mixture Recommendations (pounds per acre)*

Hay Crops			
Moderately to well drained, limed or nonacid, fertile soils			
1. Alfalfa	12-15	2. Red clover	10-12
3. Alfalfa	8-10	4. Red Clover	8-10
<i>Smooth bromegrass</i>	6-8	<i>Smooth bromegrass</i>	5-6
<i>Orchardgrass</i>	4-6	<i>Orchardgrass</i>	3-4
<i>Reed canarygrass</i>	6-8	<i>Timothy</i>	2-4
<i>Timothy</i>	3-4		
Imperfectly drained, slightly acid soils			
5. Alfalfa	5-6	6. Red clover	6-8
<i>Red clover</i>	3-4	<i>Smooth bromegrass</i>	6-8
<i>Smooth bromegrass</i>	6-8	<i>Orchardgrass</i>	4-6
<i>Orchardgrass</i>	4-6	<i>Reed canarygrass</i>	6-8
<i>Reed canarygrass</i>	6-8	<i>Timothy</i>	4-5
<i>Timothy</i>	3-4		

*Italics indicate forage choices to complete the mixture. For example, for mixture #3, mix alfalfa with either smooth bromegrass, orchardgrass, reed canarygrass, or timothy.

(continued on back)

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