



Field Notes for The Week Of

2-28-22

Which Clover should I Seed?

Here we GO! The first week of March is here and we are going up the roller coaster tracks, forecast models are predicting an above average temperature trend with little to no precipitation. This is a welcomed forecast for me and many producers considering the way the end of February treated us. The only thing that worries me is that this Lamb like beginning of March might give birth to a ferocious lion ending to March and beginning to April! This past week we had our Cow/Calf School at the Scotts farm in Georgetown Ohio, there were many good topics discussed and good conversations among producers. Topics includes reproductive management, forage analysis, supplementing grain, processing feed, and pasture management. I was able to have a few conversations with producers pertaining how to get the best bang for their buck when purchasing fertilizer this growing season. One thing is for sure fertilizer is not cheap, but plants need nutrition to grow healthy and strong. Today I want to discuss an easy and effective way to add nitrogen to the soil and increase pasture productivity without breaking the bank. Mid-February to mid-March is a great time of year to frost seed clover in pastures and hay fields. Frost seeding takes advantage of mother natures ability to incorporated small clover seeds in the soil by freezing thawing of the soil. Clover seeds work very well for frost seeding due to the weight, size, and shape of the seed. But the question I would like to address is which clover works best for pastures? Not all clover species are the same and not all species work well in a grazing environment. Here are some considerations before purchasing your seed.

- **What is your current Grazing management practice?** Grazing management is critical when preserving any type of forage. For clover species the life is in the root and its ability to reproduce. Red clover is well known for its high quality, and drought resistance due to its tap root, on the other hand it is very short lived and not resistant to heavy grazing pressure. White Dutch clover and Ladino Clover on the other hand are much more resistant to grazing and can reproduce by both seed and stolon's (above ground modified stems).
- **What are your soil conditions?** – Red clover does not like wet feet so avoiding swampy areas and poorly drained fields. White clover species will tolerate wet soil conditions and lower PH levels.
- **How much does N do clovers return to the soil?** – Legumes are well known for their ability to take free nitrogen from the atmosphere and fix nitrogen in the root system through a symbiotic relationship with bacteria in the soil (rhizobacteria). Well Established white clover can produce as much as 150lb of N per acre

