

Weekly Article

2-7-2022

Frost Seeding Considerations

Hello, my Name is Richard Purdin with OSU Extension, Ag and Natural Resource Educator and Community Development Educator for Adams County. I hope to better inform local producers and the public of the latest news in the world of Agriculture. What a start to February, hopefully the remainder of the month treats us better than the first half. With much of the county receiving up to ½ inch of ice or more and frigid cold temps the first week of February brought many challenges to the residence of all Ohio. Some of my counter parts in northern Ohio received up to 15 inches of snow and many residents lost power for days. As we all start to clean up the remnants of the 2022 February winter storm, I would like to take time to thank all the state, county, and township road workers for clearing the roads so I could take care of my cattle on other farms. I also want to thank the hard-working electric company line crews for keeping the electric on and restoring power to those who lost power. Sometimes we take things for granted and don't realize how essential utilities like electric, water, and transportation is until we don't have it, or it is restricted. Much of the modern farms today are very dependent on electricity and if you are a livestock farmer, I don't have to tell you how important water is (even in the winter). There are a few things still done on today's farming operations that go back to the basics. Today I want to discuss a great simple and easy way to enhance pasture and hay quality without breaking the bank and the best part nature is the planter!

Mid-February to Mid-March is a great time to seed hay fields and pastures with legumes such as Birds foot Trefoil, white, red, ladino, and alsike clover. This can be done by broadcasting the seed on frozen soils and then as the days warm and freeze again at night, seed will naturally be incorporated into the soil profile. This method of seeding is called frost seeding and can be an economical way to boost forage yields, increase diversity, and improve livestock rations. Here are some tips to make your frost seeding plans a success for 2022.

- **ID which field need it-** Before spending a dime on expensive seed walk your fields and make sure they really need it. Fields estimated at having less than 10% legumes are good candidates for frost seeding.
- **Buy good seed-** Clover seed is not cheap and just like everything else, shortages, shipping issues and inflation has made seed prices even higher. Buying high quality seed might cost more but good germination and more live seed per pound will save you money in the long run.

- **Choose low cover fields-** Since you are at the mercy of nature taking care of seeding, making sure that the seed reaches the soil is critical, fields that have been grazed close or thinning hay fields with more exposed soils will have the greatest success.
- **Those who seed much will reap more-** Don't skimp on seeding rates, remember since the seed is broadcasted some seed will never make it to the soil. Birds, ground squirrels, and voles love clover seed. I recommend seeding red clover at 6-8 lbs./ac, white clover at 2lbs/ac and Birds Foot Trefoil at 5-6 lbs/ac. These recommended seeding rates are based on Pure live seed, to estimate this first read the seed tag and look for % purity x % germination. Example = red clover with .90% purity x .80% germination = .72% PLS. Now that you know your Pure Live seed you will divide that PLS by 100 to see how much additional lbs you will have to plant to achieve your seeding rate goal. Example $100/72 = 1.4$, if your goal is to plant 8 lbs/ac of Pure lives seed red clover you will need to plant 9.4 lbs/ac to achieve that goal.
- **Order sooner than later-** Just like everything in 2022, forage seed is no exception, supply is tight, and prices are high. Talk to your seed dealer early to make decisions.

Some other details to go over.

- February 24, Ohio Beef Cow/Calf School Located at Scott Farm 9681, US 68 Georgetown, Ohio 45121. Cost is \$10 per person, RSVP with OSU Extension Brown County by February 17th by calling (937) 378-6716. Herd Nutrition will be the main topics discussed at the school.
- February 15th private pesticide/fertilizer applicator recertification, location of this event will be at the West Union Frisch's (back meeting room) 11157 St Rt 41, West Union, Ohio 45693. Register by calling (937) 544-2339 and mailing payments of \$35 for both Pesticide and fertilizer or \$15 dollars for fertilizer only to the office 215 North Cross St RM104 West Union, OH 45693.
- March 15, 2022, Crop Insurance sign up and Agriculture risk coverage ARC, price loss Coverage, election enrollment with the USDA FSA office. Contact me for assistance at (937) 544-2339.
- 2022 Tobacco GAP recertification course will be March 31, 2022 at Raines Farm and Greenhouse, 10:00am-12:00pm. This event will be open to both Adams and Brown County producers. Call the Adams County OSU Extension office to RSVP at (937) 544-2339.