

## **CROP NOTES for February 17, 2009**

### **Iowa State University Extension Information for Northeast Iowa**

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**Here is something that I neglected to include in the February 6 Crop Notes.**

### **CONSIDER FROST SEEDING PASTURES IN FEBRUARY & EARLY MARCH**

If there is no snow cover, this is the perfect time to frost seed existing pastures that are thin, or pastures where you would like to increase the percentage of legume in the stand. Broadcasting seed in mid- to late winter gives time for freeze-thaw cycles to shallowly incorporate the seed. Some winter seasons have less freeze-thaw cycles than others, but fortunately, early spring rains also helps with seed coverage on bare areas.

Red clover has been the most consistently successful forage species to establish with frost-seeding. Other legumes can be frost seeded with slightly less success than clovers, and less success yet with ryegrass and timothy. Other grasses are difficult to establish with frost seeding because the seeds are larger or are less competitive in initial emergence. Iowa producer experience has been best when legume seed is broadcast on the thinnest, least vigorous pasture areas. Success has also been improved where the previous grass stand has been heavily grazed, thus, exposing more areas of bare soil. Successful frost-seeding also requires average to better than average rainfall in spring. While frost-seeding is the easiest and least expensive pasture seeding approach, using a drill for more precise seed placement and seeding when soil conditions are more supportive of quick germination, such as in April, usually provide better and more uniform stand densities.

Here is some related information available on pdfs:

1) Improving Pastures by Frost Seeding

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM856.pdf>

2) Interseeding and No-till Pasture Renovation

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1097.pdf>

3) Interseeding Small Seeded Forages with Conventional Corn Planters

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1097.pdf>

4) Selecting Forage Species

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1792.pdf>

5) How Pasture Plants Grow

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1791.pdf>

6) Soon to be available from the University of Wisconsin, Frost Seeding Red Clover into Winter Wheat

<http://ipcm.wisc.edu/WCMNews/tabid/53/EntryId/667/Frost-seeding-red-clover-into-winter-wheat-publication.aspx>

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