



# Managing Annual and Italian Ryegrass as a Double Crop

## Seeding Methods

Ryegrass seed is smaller than small grains. Plant shallow with good seed to soil contact.

- a) Conventional: Broadcast seed followed by culti-packer or Brillion Seeder.
- b) Light disking followed by surface broadcast seeding and culti-packer.
- c) Drill: Seeding depth  $\frac{1}{4}$ ". If soil conditions are dry, can be seeded up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch. No deeper!

## Fall Management

Excessive fall growth (greater than 10 inches) should be harvested, grazed or clipped to 4"

## Silage Harvest Dates

Nov., mid-April, early May, and late May if not replanting quickly into alternative crop. Silage should be made when crop is about 15 to 20 inches or if coming into boot stage. Protein begins to drop after heading but not as severe as a small grain. Italian varieties typically have the ability to be productive for 2 plus years.

## Crop Rotation

Ryegrass should be either moldboard plowed or sprayed with a minimum of 2 qt of glyphosate (Roundup) per acre to kill the plant. If not controlled, it may compete with the next crop. Annual and Italian Ryegrass can become serious weeds in small grains and are not recommended where small grains are grown for grain harvest. Paraquat (Gramoxone), chiseling or heavy disking will NOT control ryegrass.

## At A Glance

### Establishment

**Seeding Rate:** 30-45 lb/acre (use higher rates for diploid varieties), **25 to 30 lbs if seeded with a small grain**

**Seeding Dates (Lancaster County, PA):** Mid August to end of September. For a November harvest plant prior to September 7. If not planning a fall harvest, delay seeding to around Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>. In many years, can be planted as late as mid-October.

### **Nitrogen Fertilization:**

50 lbs at planting (can use manure)

50 lbs March during green up.

50 lbs after each machine harvest or 2 grazing cycles.

### Grazing Dates

When plants reach 6 to 10". Under good growing conditions, the first grazing will be ready in approximately six weeks for late summer seedings. During the spring a rotation of 10 to 14 days is typical.



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