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STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL PASTURE

When can I seed?

Pawnee Buttes Seed Inc. products may be planted almost year round as long as there is adequate moisture (rain or irrigation) to keep the surface relatively moist for 45 - 60 days. Spring is the traditional seeding time. Dormant seeding (late fall or early winter) can also be successful. Dormant seeding gives the plants a quick start when soil temperatures rise.

Should I fertilize?

Begin with a fertile seedbed. Check with Pawnee Buttes Seed, your local County Extension Agent or an agronomist for a soil test and recommendations for your local area. We DO NOT recommend mixing seed and fertilizer together at planting.

How can I plant when I have all of these weeds?

Kill the existing vegetation with a non-residual herbicide. Allow time for the herbicide to work, then use tillage such as a plow, roto-tiller or disk. Remember the more farming you do the better success you will have.

Now, how do I get the seed planted?

Level and smooth the soil using an implement such as a harrow or rake. Level and break the clods down producing a firm seedbed. The soil needs to be firm enough that you barely leave a footprint (3/16"). If you do not have a means of tilling the ground some options are to burn the area or harrow it well, or use a combination of both. Remember any vegetation left will compete with your new grass. Irrigate if possible and let the ground stand for 2 -3 weeks. This will allow any weeds to germinate giving another opportunity to remove them.

How do I seed and how much do I use?

The best seeding method is a pasture drill or a grain drill with a grass seed attachment. Other options include broadcasting or using an air machine. The most important thing to remember is not to seed too deep. The most common reason for failure is placing the seed too deep; ¼ inch is deep enough. If you are using a drill and seeding too deep try pulling the tubes out of the openers and let the seed dribble on the ground. The openers usually move enough dirt to cover the seed. If it is available, rolling or packing is recommended. If you broadcast seed it is recommended to either lightly harrow or pull something light over the field, remember not too deep! The standard seeding rate for pasture is 15-20 #s per acre if drill seeding. Broadcast seeding rate increases to 20-25 #s per acre, the higher seeding rate allows for predators of the seed like birds or mice. We do not recommend planting a cover companion crop; these will only compete for moisture and sunlight. Keep the soil moist for at least 45 days, this will establish the seedlings.

I have planted and the weeds are growing really well, where did they come from?

One thing you can expect with a new planting is broadleaf weeds. These weeds did not come in the seed. They have been in the soil for years waiting for the ground to be worked so they would have a nice environment to flourish. These weed seeds will sit in your soil waiting for the right combination of moisture, light and temperatures, not to mention lack of competition to germinate. For the first 5 - 6 weeks don't worry about the weeds, wait until your new seedling is 4 -5" high and mow it back to about 3". The mowing will control a lot of the weeds. If there are still too many, apply a broadleaf herbicide. See your Pawnee Buttes Seed, Inc dealer, County Extension Agent or chemical dealer for recommendations. **Always read and follow label directions of herbicides.** Do not apply products containing 2, 4-D to your grass before it has 5 - 6 leaves. If your pasture mix contains a broadleaf such as clover or alfalfa, do not use broadleaf herbicide unless you can accept damage to your pasture.

When can I use my new pasture?

The answer is usually one year! New seedlings are very tender and can be easily damaged by hooves and grazing. Animals pull these small plants up from the roots. If you cannot wait a full year, grazing can be tolerated under these conditions; after establishment wait 60 days, graze lightly just a few hours a day. Remember the rule is to allow only the top half of the plant to be taken by the animals. Leave the bottom half for the plant and it's root system.

What can I do to extend the life of my pasture?

Manage it; after all of this work, a little time spent managing will be well worth it. Follow these steps:

- ∴ Manage the livestock, rotate their grazing.
- ∴ Keep the pasture well fed, fertilized.
- ∴ Keep the weeds out.
- ∴ Rest your pastures - give them a break.
- ∴ Renovate and restore, aerate, burn and inter-seed as needed.