

2007
May



UW — EXTENSION — LANGLADE COUNTY

Langlade Ag-Letter

Winter damage worse than drought?

The local conditions of alfalfa and winter wheat are quite poor in many areas of the county. The progression of weather through winter, lack of snow cover, and probably most substantially the early spring conditions were a recipe for disaster.

Some dairy farms are reporting tremendous stand losses alfalfa losses, greater than 90%. No till drills are apparently quite busy.

There are fields of winter wheat that are greening up nicely, but many fields are poor from standing water.

In general, the yield loss will be significant. There are several options for producers.

1. Replant alfalfa. There is no auto-toxicity from a 2006 new seeding. But for stands over one year it is best to wait one year to reseed (see option 5)
2. No till drill a non-heading Italian ryegrass at 10-15 lbs per acre will provide a highly digestible haylage to accompany weak stands.
3. On lighter soils, plant a small grain, like oats or barley. Chop or combine, spray for quack grass and then plant alfalfa Aug 1.
4. Interseed clover with alfalfa and maintain the legume as a plow-down for 2008 corn or potato.
5. Use the legume credits for this years crop about 150 lbs N for a good stand of alfalfa (more than 4 plants/ft²)
6. Consider using an Italian ryegrass nurse crop (no more than 4 lbs) in new seeding alfalfa to boost first year yields.
7. Add 40 to 50 pounds nitrogen per acre per cutting or manure to boost yields of grass and legume-grass hay fields where the legumes are thin.

Dates to Remember:

May 22—

Master Gardeners

We will meet at the Langlade Resource Center (UW Extension Office) at 5 pm.

Italian Ryegrass as a Cover Crop Seeded with Alfalfa

Dan Undersander, University of Wisconsin

Alfalfa is often established with an oat cover crop in the Midwest and Northeast. Oats as a cover crop controls weeds, reduces soil erosion, and either increases forage yield or results in oat grain and straw production. However, oats has lower forage quality and palatability than often desired. Ryegrass has shown potential as another cover crop that could be seeded with alfalfa.

Albrecht (1996) seeded early and late maturing varieties of both diploid and tetraploid Italian (annual) ryegrass with alfalfa at two locations in Wisconsin. He found that ryegrass-alfalfa mixtures yielded more than solo alfalfa but less than oats seeded with alfalfa in the seeding year.

However, the ryegrass generally yielded more consistently throughout the growing season than oats which yielded little after first cutting. Ryegrass also produced higher quality forage than oat cover crops. The data generally suggested that early maturing varieties performed better than late maturing varieties of ryegrass. The data (not shown) also suggested that diploid varieties of ryegrass resulted in greater ryegrass/alfalfa yields in the seeding year.

Total season yield of Italian ryegrass-alfalfa mixtures during seeding year, Arlington and Marshfield, '92&'93		
	Tons/ac	NDF % DM
Early maturing, 2N	3.63	49.5
Early maturing, 4N	3.68	50.0
Late maturing, 2N	3.23	46.5
Late maturing, 4N	3.26	44.2
Solo alfalfa	2.80	39.2

Ryegrass can cause reduced alfalfa stands if seeded too heavy and the spring is cool and wet. On the other extreme, ryegrass will produce little growth if dry

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Langlade County

Phone: (715)627-6236

Fax: (715) 627-6260

Email: alex.crockford@ces.uwex.edu

<http://langlade.uwex.edu>

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conditions occur during establishment.

We believe that seeding Italian ryegrass as a cover crop for alfalfa is a viable option when these recommendations are followed:

- Choose a diploid, early maturing Italian ryegrass variety (forage type not turf).
- Seed the Italian (annual) ryegrass at two to four pounds per acre.
- Take first crop 60 days after seeding.

See recent U of MN data below for comparative feed quality determinations.

Forage quality of Italian ryegrass averaged/totalled over four of five harvests, and at a September harvest compared to orchardgrass, Stearns Co., MN plots in 2004.

Variety	Description	Harvest(s)	RFQ	RFV	Milk/Ton <i>Lb/ton</i>	Milk/Acre <i>Lb/ac</i>
Barextra	Tetraploid	Four	193	143	3,130	19,000
Bardelta	Diploid	Four	181	138	3,030	17,500
Barextra	Tetraploid	Sept. 27	164	119	2,930	4,480
Bardelta	Diploid	Sept. 27	150	111	2,750	3,520
Baridana	Orchardgrass	Sept. 27	124	101	2,160	2,400

2005-06 Langlade Crop Data (USDA National Ag Statistics Service)

Commodity	Year	Planted	Harvested	Yield	Production
Wheat Winter All	2005	2300 acres	2000 acres	60 bushel	120000 bushel
Wheat Winter All	2006	3300 acres	3100 acres	72 bushel	222000 bushel
Wheat All	2005	2300 acres	2000 acres	60 bushel	120000 bushel
Wheat All	2006	3300 acres	3100 acres	72 bushel	222000 bushel
Corn For Grain	2005	10500 acres	5700 acres	102 bushel	581000 bushel
Corn For Grain	2006	11200 acres	5000 acres	104 bushel	522000 bushel
Corn For Silage	2005		4600 acres	13 tons	61000 tons
Corn For Silage	2006		6000 acres	14 tons	84000 tons
Oats	2005	10500 acres	7700 acres	65 bushel	498000 bushel
Oats	2006	10500 acres	9400 acres	62 bushel	580000 bushel
Barley All	2005	900 acres	500 acres	55 bushel	27500 bushel
Barley All	2006	900 acres	700 acres	66 bushel	46500 bushel
Soybeans	2005	5100 acres	4900 acres	24 bushel	118000 bushel
Soybeans	2006	2900 acres	2800 acres	36 bushel	100000 bushel
Hay Alfalfa (Dry)	2005		9000 acres	1.9 tons	17000 tons
Hay Alfalfa (Dry)	2006		10100 acres	2.7 tons	27200 tons
Hay Other (Dry)	2005		9200 acres	1.2 tons	10900 tons
Hay Other (Dry)	2006		9100 acres	1.5 tons	13700 tons
Hay All (Dry)	2005		18200 acres	1.5 tons	27900 tons
Hay All (Dry)	2006		19200 acres	2.1 tons	40900 tons
Forage Alfalfa(Dry Hay+Haylage)	2005		16800 acres	2.5 tons	41700 tons
Forage Alfalfa(Dry Hay+Haylage)	2006		17500 acres	3.3 tons	57100 tons
Forage All(Dry Hay+Haylage)	2005		27900 acres	2 tons	56700 tons
Forage All(Dry Hay+Haylage)	2006		27700 acres	2.7 tons	73600 tons
Snap Beans For Processing	2005	1800 acres	1800 acres	3.6 tons	6500 tons
Potatoes All	2005	11300 acres	11300 acres	350 bags	3952000 cwts

No data for 2006 Potatoes

