

Time To Frost Seed Legumes Is Now



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The time to frost seed legumes into pastures is now. Frost seeding is the practice of broadcasting the seed onto the soil surface and then the freezing thawing action, will move the seed into the soil. This is an inexpensive method to add legumes

to a pasture.

Red clover is the easiest of the legumes to establish into pastures. Other legumes can be also established but red clover can tolerate early season shading better than other legumes. Also, red clover grows well with a variety of grasses such as tall fescue, smooth brome, orchard-grass along with timothy.

For best results, frost seed during February. The swings in temperature create freeze thaw cycles but later in March, the number of cycles is reduced.

Frost seeding works best in pastures where

bare soil exists or where heavy grazing has removed the old plant residues. Thick foliage and residues provide a barrier that seed must move through to get to the soil surface.

Over-seeding of grasses does not work as well as legumes. A much better practice when seeding grasses is to inter-seed. Interseed refers to using a drill to plant the seed by cutting the plant residues and placing the seed shallowly in the soil.

Once the legumes or grasses emerge in the spring, it is best to flash graze the existing forage to allow the new seedlings to get established. Care must be taken to prevent the existing forages from shading the new emerging seedlings. If grazing cannot be used, one can clip pastures using a mower.

For more information, contact Wayne Flanary at 660-446-3724 or Heather Benedict at 660-425-6434, Regional Agronomists, University of Missouri Extension. Δ

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