



## Annual Pasture Systems

### Summer Annuals for Heavy Use Areas & Successful Pasture Renovation

Often a pasture renovation, or establishment window of opportunity passes us by for the successful planting of a perennial grass and legume pasture, maybe because we just weren't prepared. Sometimes weather events destroy even our best efforts towards a successful pasture planting. Possibly, the site we have selected for that new pasture area is extremely laden with perennial weeds, or we continuously overstock it. All of the stated scenarios may warrant the utilization of a summer annual pasture planting system. A summer annual pasture includes annual forage species capable of quick, lush, summer growth, which are often quite drought resistant.

The advantages of these summer annuals are multi-fold such as; providing highly palatable forage, aggressive competition with weeds, reducing erosion, and improving soil organic matter and tilth. Often, when utilized, the summer annual forages prepare the pasture for a more successful transition into the establishment of a more permanent pasture than can be accomplished by a pasture renovation, or rotation directly from a row crop, such as corn. Annual species that are excellent candidates for summer annual forage production includes the millets (especially German foxtail millet), lespedeza, soybeans (forage varieties), sorghums, and sudax (a sorghum X sudangrass). Be aware that sorghum and sudax should not be used for horses due to problems associated with prussic acid toxicity. The combination of a summer annual forage grass (millet) with an annual legume (lespedeza) increases the quality and quantity of forage produced. For details about developing a summer annual pasture system for your farm give your local Extension Office a call.

### Temporary Pastures for Heavy Use Areas

There is no reason why heavy animal use areas should not have some pasturing ability during the year. Feeding out confined cattle or boarding horses usually requires exercise lots with heavy use, and there is no reason not to develop a management strategy to also maximize their pasturing potential. The answer is frequent and scheduled planting of these areas. Heavy animal use areas require special soil attention, such as adequate liming, and soil amendments.

Organic matter, spoiled hay, straw, and manure needs to be uniformly spread throughout the entire paddock. It may be necessary to add inorganic materials such as sand to promote proper soil drainage and tilth. Light tillage prior to seasonal plantings may be all that is required for successful broadcast seeding with inexpensive equipment.

In the fall on lightly tilled soil, broadcast 1.5 bu/acre cereal rye var. Abruzzi + 20 lbs/acre annual ryegrass var. Marshall and 15 lbs/acre tall fescue var. Kentucky 31. Also broadcast apply prilled urea 100 lb/acre. After, seeding lightly harrow and roll firmly. This area will quickly green and support moderate to heavy pasturing into the winter, and will be especially useful if rotational use of the paddock or paddocks is possible.





In early March, on the lightly tilled and repaired soil, sow the same seed mixture, oats may be substituted for the cereal rye, and again apply prilled urea 75 to 100 lbs/acre.

Overseed the paddocks in Mid-May with a broadcast seeding of 25lbs/acre German foxtail millet, followed by light tillage and a firming of the soil. All of the above mentioned seeding might also be accomplished with a grain-drill followed by a roller-harrow or culti-packer.



## Annual Cover Crop Options for Southern Maryland

Crop Species	Planting Date	Seeding Rate/A	Seed Cost/A*
Austrian Winter Pea	March 1st	75 lbs	\$39.00
Oats	March 1st	120 lbs	\$22.56
Striate Lespedeza (Kobe)	March 1st	35 lbs	\$28.00
Korean Lespedeza	March 5th	30 lbs	\$21.60
Forage Soybeans	May 12th	75 lbs	\$45.00
Sudax	May 20th	40 lbs	\$24.00
Brown Mid-Rib Sorghum	May 20th	40 lbs	\$26.00
German Foxtail Millet	May 25th	30 lbs	\$15.72
Japanese Millet	May 25th	30 lbs	\$22.05
Pearl Millet	May 25th	35 lbs	\$22.40
Hairy Vetch	September 1st	25 lbs	\$31.25
Crimson Clover	September 1st	25 lbs	\$34.13
Annual Ryegrass	September 15th	30 lbs	\$26.10
Cereal Rye	September 25th	120 lbs	\$19.20

\* Seed Cost is based upon December 2, 2002 price quotes per 50 lb unit from the Southern States Corporation. Not an Endorsement. For educational purposes only.

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