NORTHERN MINNESOTA GRASS SEED GROWERS
NEWSLETTER
April 13, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first edition of the Grass Seed Growers Newsletter for 2010. The primary objective of this newsletter is to report on growing conditions, crop development and progress of perennial ryegrass and bluegrass crops. The newsletter will be sent weekly, with pest alerts as pests infestations dictate or production problems arise.

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RYEGRASS GROWING DEGREE DAYS (GDD)

Ryegrass GDD will be tracked for the 2010 growing season with comparisons to the last three years. A base temp of 32 degrees F will be used for ryegrass (T-Base =32 F).

Bluegrass and ryegrass plants are in the green-up stage and are beginning to grow. The tracking of GDD information will begin next week.

Several growers have asked about soil temperatures. When will the soil temperatures reach 40F? The following information lists soil temperatures in both tilled and turf (sod) conditions near Roseau.

Table1. Calendar date when soil temperatures reach 40 F, in tilled and turf conditions near Roseau in 2005 to 2010.

	2010	**2009**	**2008**	**2005**	**2006**	**2005**
Tilled	3-30	4-14	4-15	4-14	4-11	4-6
Turf		4-29	4-18	4-19	4-11	4-16
Difference		15	3	5	0	10

The 2010 season has yet to reach 40 F in turf. However, in tilled soil the 2010 season has reached the 40 F mark at the earliest calendar date since 2005. As expected, it generally taken longer for the soil to warm up in turf (sod) compared to tilled ground. Thus far, the 2010 season has the makings for an early start to the crop year.

GENERAL CROP CONDITION

Ryegrass

It appears most perennial ryegrass plants survived the winter. To access winter survivability of various ryegrass varieties, a trial was seeded in August of 2009 at the Magnusson Research Farm north of Roseau. Reports from this trial indicate all ryegrass varieties survived the winter, even annual ryegrass, which is an indication of a mild winter.

Bluegrass

Bluegrass fields are just beginning to greening up. Bluegrass plants will soon beginning show signs of "stretching out" and will soon begin a rapid elongation growth phase. It is important to get weed control and fertility operations completed prior to this elongation and jointing stage.

PEST MANAGEMENT

Ryegrass

Reports are coming in that volunteer wheat will be a problem in many ryegrass fields this year. In most years, spring wheat seeded in the fall is killed due to the winter and the freeze thaw cycles in the spring. This year it looks like we may have to control this volunteer wheat in ryegrass. If ryegrass is tolerant to Assure II, this will not present much of a control problem. However, in other ryegrass varieties, volunteer wheat may present a problem that may require control. Two options for control are Callisto and Nortron. The rate of Nortron is 2 pints/A, and is applied without an additive. Callisto use rate is 3 to 6 oz/A with crop oil (1 gal/100 gallons of spray solution). Nortron activity is primarily through the soil (root uptake) and if used should be applied as soon as field conditions allow. Callisto has both soil and foliar activity, but previous research suggests plants must be actively growing to optimize herbicide performance. More next week.

Herbicide applications for broadleaf weeds are right around the corner. Now is the time to scout fields for broadleaf weeds. Winter annuals (dandelion, shepardspurse, and cockle) are beginning to grow. Annual weeds (volunteer canola, mustard, and smartweed) are first to emerge in the spring. Weeds grow fast and regular scouting is essential to determine the best weed control program for your situation.

CROP MANAGEMENT

Ryegrass

If ryegrass has not been fertilized, now is the time to begin planning a ryegrass fertility program. A single application of nitrogen has been successful in the past. Recent trial results indicate a split application of nitrogen may offer more efficient use of nitrogen with higher ryegrass yields. More next week.

Bluegrass

If bluegrass was not fertilized last fall it is critical to get nitrogen to these fields soon. Nitrogen must be in the root zone during the rapid growth phase of late tillering and jointing.

A discussion of herbicide choices for broadleaf control in ryegrass and fertility programs in ryegrass and spring herbicide applications in bluegrass will be included in next week's edition which will be released on April 20, 2010.