



Late Summer Seeding Opportunities

Many farmers throughout the US are suffering from drought conditions this summer. If rain does come to the drought-stricken areas producers will probably ask what to plant to get the highest yielding, highest quality forage for grazing or chopping this fall. One option that may work very well is to plant Appin Turnips or Pasja Hybrid Brassica with Oats and Cereal Rye (or wheat, triticale, or ryegrass).

What should we plant?

The following formula has worked well in Illinois over the past 3-4 years; yielding as much as 8 tons of DM/acre in the fall and winter. Be sure to recommend "seed quality" cereal grains if possible. Plant Two (2) –bushels of oats, 1 ½ bushels of cereal rye and 5# of Appin (or Pasja) per acre. (Oats provide substantially more tons of forage in the fall than the cereal rye).

Options to this mix would be to use Feast II Short Rotation Ryegrass, Fantastic Annual Ryegrass, or Assertive Annual Ryegrass. These grasses should provide a higher quality feed later into the spring next year than cereal rye might. Sow the ryegrasses at 20#/acre with the oats and brassicas.

Under good growing conditions, and by adding 30-40 units of N after sowing, there should be opportunity for excellent yields of palatable forage.

When do I plant?

Early August to mid-September will work in many areas. For northern regions you will want to be done by September 1st. For those in the mid-South and mid-Atlantic regions you can plant until mid to late September. The earlier you plant the greater the potential for top production.

How quickly can you graze?

The question can only be answered "it depends". It depends IF you get moisture (approximately 1 inch over time that crops are germinating and starting to grow), and IF you have proper seeding depth, and IF there is additional rain, and IF you fertilize with N (~50 units/acre)...you get the idea. But IF the late summer rains do come and we get a "normal" fall and you fertilize, you can hopefully start grazing in 50-60 days after emergence. There have been instances of folks grazing 35 days after planting...and others waiting 75 days...and it was mainly weather related. Planting depth on the brassicas is ¼" so be careful to not get them too deep.

How do I get the best out of this crop?

Appin and Pasja were bred to provide multiple grazings. There may be opportunities to get those grazings; but only if the producer will strip graze or rotationally graze the oats/Appin/rye mix (leaving approximately 4" of stubble). By back fencing the crop you will hopefully have good conditions to have re-growth to provide subsequent grazings. If you cannot back-fence then at least strip graze so you get the best utilization of the productive, high quality crop you hope to have.

What about sowing after corn?

Many producers have had good success by sowing this mix after the corn is harvested or by flying it into standing corn. Make sure that the fields did not have more than 1#/acre of atrazine applied in the spring. Also wait until the corn plants are dried down approximately ½ the way up the stalk. This will allow more sunlight to get to the ground to help the plants to grow better. Grazing this mix with corn stalks can make excellent feed for cattle and sheep alike.

Why use Appin or Pasja?

Appin and Pasja have shown to produce considerably more protein than Purple Tops. While the producer may save some cash when he purchases his seed he will probably give up over 500# additional protein per acre by not using Appin or Pasja. In a Nebraska study, Appin produced more than 700# additional protein over Purple Tops in just one harvest. If you do get additional grazings off of the Appin or Pasja then that number would grow. So while the Appin and Pasja seed costs more, it really should make you more money to use them because they are so much more productive.

What will I have next spring?

If you use rye, wheat, triticale, or one of the ryegrasses, you should have very good early spring grazing. Cereal rye may give the quickest green-up of the group. The oats and turnips will not live through the winter.