

1999
EORDC
Cereal Rye Grazing

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As livestock producers attempt to extend the grazing season the use of cool-season annuals must be considered. A cereal rye grazing project was implemented at EORDC in Belle Valley. We utilized cereal rye as a means to extend the grazing season and to provide rest for our stockpiled fescue plots. The rye was planted September 10th. One acre of cereal rye "Aroostook" was established by broadcasting at a rate of two bushels per acre onto disked soil. The field was then cultipacked. When the rye emerged 50 units of nitrogen was applied as ammonium nitrate. Seventy-four days later twenty-two crossbred ewe lambs were introduced to the rye. The ewes were rotationally grazed for thirty days. Rye strips were constructed with three strands of poly tape electric fence and step-in posts.

Spring growth was grazed May 1-3rd with 40 head of heifers, average weight 896 lbs. These heifers were provided free access to the entire paddock.

Summary of Costs

Land Use charge	\$30/A
Fertilizer, 34-0-0	\$21.60/A
Spraying "Gramoxone"	\$16/A
Broadcast seeding	\$4/A
Tractor use	\$4/A
Seed cost	<u>\$15/A</u>
Total cost	\$90/A (labor & fence not included)

Fall production - 1980 lbs. of DM consumed
Spring production - 2670 lbs. of DM consumed
Cost/ton of DM consumed = \$38.70

Summary:

Cereal rye provided good quality late season and early season growth. Fall growth can be limited by dry weather and cold conditions. Spring growth of cereal rye is extremely rapid and probably not as well utilized due to the rapid growth of cool-season grasses at this time. Grazers should plan to cultivate cereal rye so that the forage is generated when needed.