

# TIMELY INFORMATION

## Agriculture & Natural Resources

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### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### Spring planting of Cool Season Perennial Grasses

##### **Q. Can I plant cool season perennial grasses (i.e. Tall Fescue, Orchardgrass) in the Spring?**

Planting recommendations for cool season perennial grasses, like Tall Fescue and Orchardgrass, in the Southeast are for **Fall planting** and stand establishment for use the following fall (<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0149/ANR-0149.pdf> for planting recommendation for Grasses in Alabama).

We **do not** recommend spring seeding of these forage grasses in Alabama. While potential exists that in an absolutely ideal environment and perfect weather year a perennial grass stand could successfully establish in the Spring, the reality is that the chances of obtaining a successful stand in the Spring are slim and therefore this is not a practice we recommend.

##### **Q. Can I plant Novel Endophyte Tall Fescue in the Spring?**

NO. Planting recommendations for Tall Fescue are the same regardless of endophyte status. The costs incurred when investing in a newly established Novel Endophyte Tall Fescue pasture/hayfield should be viewed as a long term investment. With this in mind, you need to give every advantage to the seed to achieve stand success. Make sure you follow seeding rate, date, depth, and planting recommendations when establishing new stands. Planting forage near the recommended time and under recommended conditions is critical to stand success.

##### **Q. I have spotty/thinning Tall Fescue, what option do I have to fill these areas in the Spring?**

It is commonly recommended to utilize legumes to the extent possible in pastures/hayfields. Seeding legumes into existing stands is an excellent option to exploit thinning stands. Not only are you providing a cover in the bare soil areas of a field, but you will also be providing nitrogen through the nitrogen fixing nodules found on legume roots. Commonly planted legumes that are complimentary companions to cool season perennial grasses are White or Red Clover and could be successfully established through the end of March (<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0150/ANR-0150.pdf> for planting recommendations for Legumes in Alabama).

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**Q. I planted Tall Fescue in the fall unsuccessfully and have complete stand loss in the Spring, what options do I have?**

While replanting the stand in the Spring is **not** a recommended practice, producers do have an option to use the area until attempting establishment again the following fall.

Utilize summer annual forages – Summer annual grasses like sudangrass, sorghum-sudangrass, and pearl millet can provide ground cover and a high quality forage option for grazing or harvesting during the summer months. Crabgrass is another high quality warm season grass that can provide good forage for a grazing and ground cover during the summer months. \*REMEMBER: Crabgrass has very aggressive growth and can be considered a weed in some situations. While an annual grass (completes it's lifecycle in one season), crabgrass is an excellent reseeder and volunteer stands are common. Crabgrass grows vigorously and will need to be robustly controlled during tall fescue establishment to achieve a successful stand.

Planting summer annual grasses can:

1. Provide forage during the summer months on land that would otherwise be barren
  2. Provide ground cover to aid in soil stabilization and prevention of soil erosion
  3. Serve as a smother crop \*Important if establishing into an area that had previously been toxic fescue
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