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David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

Calendar Conflicts of Fall Brome Establishment

If rejuvenating that struggling brome stand was on your fall to-do list, it's time to get started. While there isn't a 'recipe' for rejuvenation, there are best management practices, and some of those might make the window for action this fall seem pretty tight.

Start with an understanding of planting date. Across much of NEK, the optimum fall planting window for brome is from now through September 20th. That's not to say we can't extend beyond that (note: other forages could have completely different establishment windows...), but the recommended dates are in place to help us optimize chances for establishment success. Until that new plant has three to four leaves, we may not have enough of a root system to provide the winterhardiness the new seedling needs to survive winter. Mid-late September seeding offers us that opportunity based on what we know are kind of 'average' end of growing season dates. If we go much later, we run the risk of not getting enough leaf area to produce the root system we need. At the very least, we may delay greenup next spring. At the worst, plants may not survive.

If weed control was a part of your post-harvest rejuvenation strategy, application timing of those products is important as well. Some products have very short, required intervals between time of application and reseeding. Others are much longer. Be sure you refer to label guidelines before reseeding to insure the herbicide won't result in potential germination issues while providing enough time for plants to get established.

I'm a big proponent of soil tests, but results aren't immediate, requiring in most cases from seven to 10 days from shipping to results. You can most definitely work towards establishment without one, but if fertility is part of the reason the stand needs rejuvenation in the first place, an accurate soil test is a great place to start. At the very least, try to get a soil test prior to any fertilizer applications even if you need to make said application prior to having results back to work from.

If you've already planned for seed, pulled a soil sample, and are aware of any potential reseeding restrictions – you're ahead of the game. If you haven't, make sure you are at least considering what it might take to give your seeding the best chance of success – even if that means a different plan altogether.