

R. L. & Pat Dalrymple DALRYMPLE FARMS

dba "Elstel Farm & Seeds"
"The Crabgrass Seed Folks "

Warehouse: 24160 East 950 Road
Weatherford, OK 73096
No Phone

Farm/Office : 24275 East 910 Road
Thomas, OK 73669
Phone/Fax: 580-661-3997

E-Mail:rlandpat@cableone.net•Web:redrivercrabgrass.com•R.L.'s Cell Ph:580-670-0043(Best No.)

Fact Sheet 2006 : Field Or Soil Surface Preparation When Overseeding With 'Quick-N-Big®' Crabgrass And 'Red River' Crabgrass

'Quick-N-Big®' Crabgrass (QNBCG) and 'Red River' Crabgrass (RRCG) are researched and selected varieties of crabgrass used for forage and conservation. They are warm season grasses easily managed for volunteer stands , if that is one of the objectives. Both varieties are also used to over-seed into numerous winter and summer crops and grasses. Both varieties are used for grazing , hay or silage , and soil conservation (ground cover). These grasses are grazed well by cattle, horses, sheep, goats, exotics and even grazing poultry and grazing hogs. They are used as a single crop, double crop with winter annuals and perennials, and in innumerable mixtures. Both varieties are widely adapted to the 25 most southeast states from Nebraska east to the coast and south to the coast, in addition to some areas farther north , and areas to the west under irrigation clear to California

QNBCG and RRCG are planted and started in many ways ranging from using good , precise seedbeds , to various **low equipment input over-seeding methods**. Perhaps the number one way that they are started in these methods, is by over-seeding into a winter annual to start a double crop. Winter annuals are wheat, rye, oats, barley, triticale, annual ryegrass, annual bromegrasses, and many forage legumes , etc. Most plantings have been by broadcasting the seed into the winter annual stand in a seed-fertilizer mixture during the late winter to spring fertilizer top-dressing time. Generally these procedures have been **successful in the long term**. Usually the crabgrass stand emerges erratically, somewhat spotty, and unpredictably over weeks or even months. Sometimes the first year stand is a thin to moderate stand and drops seed for the next years earlier and good volunteer stand. That is satisfactory if the producer wants that and they are content with that approach. There is less equipment input to get the stand going at a good level -- in time. It takes time , and to some producers----time is money. Sometimes the crabgrass stand in these cases develops very uniform and rapid . **Dalrymple Farm has had superb stands this way, by June, but in other times it was August before a fair stand was in hand.** However, we have never had a gross stand failure with this method.. Stands

are highly rainfall related as **rain is part of the planting procedure**. **Good stands can happen**. Stands planted this way tend to develop better on the sandier soils and , naturally , with good distribution of rainfall.

There can be much control even in this relatively non-precise , lower input method. First, care should be taken to have the area **well grazed** by winters end, just before the broadcast seeding occurs , and then be sure to **utilize the winter crop completely** at seasons end. This is to “release” the over seeded crabgrass so it can grow as well as feasible under this case. Second, before the seed is broadcast , **lightly prepare the soil surface with a “light tillage”**. Tools to use are : a rotary hoe, heavy spiketooth harrow , very light disc set to run straight and on the soil surface, etc. **Any tool that will scratch , or poke , a hole in the soil surface and not totally destroy the stand being planted into, will help**. Dalrymple Farms **prefer the rotary hoe technique**. The idea is to prepare the surface , somewhat , so there will be some **“mini-seedbeds “** for some of the seed to fall on , and thus get a little soil cover with the rains , snow , or the treading of livestock. In “on farm” research, it was found that **about 75% of the rotary hoe tooth marks contained 1 to several seed** , when the seed was broadcast on the area at 3 pounds per acre after rotary hoeing. That is a good thing. Rain and livestock treading help cover the seed lightly and thus, finish the planting in this case. Rolling or cultipacking the area after seeding is good, but not mandatory. **This light “tillage” helps to get more plants established for the seed being put out.**

QNBCG is a smoother seed, and a good clean QNBCG will flow through the small seed/legume seed box (alfalfa seed box) on drills. RRCG does not flow as well. **The drill method is better** than the broadcast method , when it is available , and higher density, more uniform stands are very likely. **Set the drill to penetrate from the soil surface to no deeper than ½ inch deep. Depth control methods on the drill are desirable. In our on-farm research, 1/16 in flute sticking out inside the seed box equals about 1 pound of QNBCG seed per acre.**

This paragraph will be a repeat somewhat, but it is important. A very easy and common way, if the tool is available, is to run over the field just before planting with a rotary hoe. Other tools can do this too. This method has been excellent for enhancing stands. Do this when there is some moisture in the surface soil to allow better penetration of the hoe spikes. The rotary hoe makes a tooth mark about ½ to 1 inch deep (a divot) about every 3 to 6 inches, more or less , and each of those marks is a **“mini seedbed”** for some seed to fall into. **At usual rates of planting , about 80% , more or less , of these marks will have some seed land in them by our measure. Those seeds have landed on a prepared seedbed, but a small one.** Then, as the rains come or livestock tread on the spot, the seed is lightly covered with a blanket of soil that **helps hold the moisture around the seed to effect a better stand for the seed amount planted. Thus, stands planted in “seedbeds “ like this develop more uniform and rapid.** This preparation is desirable, on any soil, but seems even more important on the medium and fine textured

soils. **In areas where frost seeding can be employed, that too, is a form of surface tillage and that helps to get a light soil cover on the seed.**

Lightly covered seed can stay damp or wet for many days after rain compared to seed laying on the soil surface , thus helping to get better stands. QNBCG seed, at warm enough temperatures, sprouts sooner and more uniform than RRCG seed. When it is **warm enough**, these seeds need a minimum of 3 to 5 days to sprout and tack a root into the soil. Daytime soil temperature **around the seed** needs to be a minimum of 70 degrees F, and more preferably 75 to 85 degrees F for rapid and uniform germination. The more warm-damp days , the better for the seed. **This same technique can be used to over-seed crabgrass into “last summers crop stubble.”**

A PRECAUTION: QNBCG sprouts sooner than RRCG in general. There have been a very few cases when QNBCG came up early in these planting syndromes, or in volunteer, and an abnormal late hard freeze killed the first stand or part of it. This happened to Dalrymple Farms in spring 2013. A QNBCG stand was up to a stand of 1 to 5 leaf seedlings. A hard freeze of 26 to 28 degrees F occurred. This temperature killed many of the 1 to 3 leaf seedlings, and damaged even the 4 to 5 leaf seedlings, but the damaged seedlings recovered and re-grew and continued to grow, and the stand resulted in a successful one. So, it may be wise to do this kind of planting with QNBCG later and into the early warmer days of spring.