

**NORTHERN MINNESOTA GRASS SEED GROWERS  
NEWSLETTER  
July 18, 2011**

**RYEGRASS GROWING DEGREE DAYS (GDD)**

Ryegrass GDD will be tracked for the 2011 growing season with comparisons to the last four years. A base temp of 32 degrees F will be used for ryegrass (T-Base = 32 F).

Table 1. Growing degree days (GDD) for March, April, May, June and July 2006 - 2011 near Roseau MN.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2011 vs. 10</b>
March	7	137	30	6	90	-130
April	278	476	247	202	322	-198
May	639	707	515	501	746	-68
June	898	911	860	870	990	-13
July		1,174	943	1,034	1,156	
July 1-17	636					
Total	2,458	3,405	2,595	2,613	3,461	

For the week ending July 17th, 260 GDD were accumulated with an average of 37.1 GDD/day. We have had three weeks of warm temperatures and the short term forecast for daily high temperatures in the 90's.

**GENERAL CROP CONDITION**

Ryegrass

Some area ryegrass fields are beginning to turn color which is a sign of maturity. In previous years, ryegrass is swathed between 2,750 and 2,900 GDD. With the short term forecast for temperatures in the 90's, by the weekend we will have accumulated over 2,700 GDD. Be sure to scout ryegrass fields this week to monitor maturity levels.

Bluegrass

'Park' and 'Minnefine' bluegrass varieties have been harvested.

**PEST MANAGEMENT**

Ryegrass

Leaf and stem rust has been observed in several area ryegrass fields. The heat of the last three weeks has "pushed" ryegrass maturity. If rust is detected this week in ryegrass fields that will be swathed in the next week or 10 days a fungicide treatment may not be warranted. However, if rust is detected in ryegrass fields that are two weeks or longer from swathing consideration should be given to a fungicide treatment to protect the ryegrass field. Consult with your agronomist or fieldman for local experience.

Ryegrass

Army worms have been found in area ryegrass fields. At this time, armyworm infestations are NOT to threshold levels. As would be expected, the most likely areas to find armyworms are lodged areas of the ryegrass fields.

## **CROP MANAGEMENT**

### **Bluegrass**

With bluegrass harvest complete the next management step is burning the bluegrass straw and residue. Burning is one of the CRITICAL steps in bluegrass management. A good burn sets the stage for seed production for the next season. A desiccant should be considered if the bluegrass straw is light, poor distribution of straw or excessive bluegrass growth. Relative humidity levels in the 40's, or lower, tend to promote a clean burn of bluegrass straw.

Remember to get a burning permit and it's always a good idea to give your neighbors a "heads up" when you plan to burn. One of the first reactions to smoke in the neighborhood is a house or building fire. A phone call or two prior to burning will ease some of this anxiety.

### **Ryegrass**

When to swath ryegrass? That is a question often asked by growers. It seems our eyes are drawn to the most mature areas of the field. When making a determination on when to cut ryegrass make sure a **representative sample is taken from the entire field not just the areas that are most mature**. One method to get a representative field sample is to take samples from areas that look mature, from areas that are intermediate and from areas of the field that look green. Note the percentage of the field in each of these categories. This will give you a good overall field estimate of maturity. Once these samples are collected seed moisture can be determined using a microwave oven. If possible delay swathing until moisture content of the seed is 35 to 40%. Seed moisture content is determined rubbing the seed from the spike and using the microwave oven to remove the seed moisture.

**Caution:** In addition to the seed sample, place a small amount of water in a microwave safe container. This will prevent the seed from exploding in the oven. Start with a predetermined seed weight (10 grams) and set the microwave oven for 1 to 1.5 minutes. Continue this procedure until the seed weight is constant. For example, if the initial weight was 10 grams and the final weight was 6 grams the seed moisture is 40%.

The next Grass Seed Newsletter will be released on July 25, 2011.