

**NORTHERN MINNESOTA GRASS SEED GROWERS
NEWSLETTER
July 25, 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.

Year	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2011 vs. 10
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 1-24	903					
Total	2,725	3,405	2,595	2,613	3,461	

For the week ending July 24th, 267 GDD were accumulated with an average of 38.1 GDD/day. We have had four weeks of warm temperatures which has “pushed” ryegrass to maturity.

GENERAL CROP CONDITION

Ryegrass

Late last week and over the weekend several area ryegrass fields have been swathed. Swathing of ryegrass will continue this week. As the ryegrass plant matures, fields can mature quickly, especially with warm days of late July into August. When ryegrass is close to the 40% moisture level, seed moisture can drop 2% points or more per day!

As ryegrass seed moisture levels decline, the amount of seed shatter will increase. Ryegrass fields that have turned quickly may have to be swathed in the early morning and evening. This technique of not swathing mid-day was a management practice used to reduce seed shatter in timothy seed production.

Winter wheat is quickly turning color and it won't be long before spring wheat begins to mature. If ryegrass is to be seeded into wheat stubble it is important to get a **uniform spread of the wheat straw and chaff**. Chaff spreaders will spread hulls and other “fines”. A uniform spread of the wheat straw is the first step in successful ryegrass stand establishment. More on ryegrass stand establishment into wheat stubble in next week's newsletter.

PEST MANAGEMENT

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. If armyworms are in ryegrass fields that are swathed, the most likely place to find them is under the swaths.

CROP MANAGEMENT

Bluegrass

Bluegrass harvest should wrap up this week. After harvest the next management step in bluegrass production is burning. A good burn 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 August 1, 2011.