

# **NORTHERN MINNESOTA GRASS SEED GROWERS NEWSLETTER MAY 12, 2008**

## **GENERAL CROP CONDITION**

### **What a Difference a Year can Make!**

Last year saw spring planting and grass seed fields greening and growing at this first week of May. Well, it may still be another week until we begin to work fields, and a nice greening up of grass fields may be further behind that.

However, the overwintering of grasses seems to be a complete turnaround in comparison to last year. Estimates are that 95% of fields look very good.

### **Ryegrass**

Reports around the area have the ryegrass crop looking good with almost all fields making it through the winter.

Ryegrass plants in spring and fall seeded fields are in the tillering stage of development.





## **Bluegrass**

Early bluegrass varieties are in the jointing stage. Last year at this time, early bluegrass varieties were already getting close to flag leaf stage!



## **PEST MANAGEMENT**

### **Ryegrass**

Will rust be a problem this year in Minnesota? The USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) tracks the movement of cereal rust throughout the year. Every two weeks during the growing season the USDA ARS reports on the progress of rust in a publication titled: Cereal Rust Bulletin. This publication is available at [www.ars.usda.gov/mwa/cdl](http://www.ars.usda.gov/mwa/cdl). Keep yourself updated.

## **CROP MANAGEMENT**

### **Ryegrass**

If ryegrass has not been fertilized, schedule this operation as soon as possible. It is not too late, but if ryegrass fields are too kept for seed production fertilizer should be applied in the next two weeks.

### **Bluegrass**

Scout bluegrass fields for powdery mildew. With the cool and wet conditions that this spring is giving us, scouting bluegrass fields for powdery mildew in the next few weeks will be warranted. Cool temperatures generally correspond to heavy dews. With temperatures below the dew point, the dew



falls early in the evening and remains on the plant foliage until mid-to late morning. Continue to scout fields every 2 to 3 days until weather conditions change. Powdery mildew will not spread if weather conditions are hot and dry.

### **Natives**

Still no sign of new life in the Bluestem or Switchgrass fields.







### **Ryegrass Growing Degree Days (GDD)**

Ryegrass GDD units have been tracked since the 2005 season. A base temp of 32 degrees F has been used for ryegrass (T-Base =32 F). The GDD information presented in the table below is year to date data through and including April 30 for the years 2005 to 2008.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>08 vs. 07</b>
March	6	90	53	35	-84
April	202	322	529	448	-120
Total	208	412	582	483	-204

As of April 30<sup>th</sup> the 2008 season has started out colder than any year since 2005. In fact, reports from Lake of the Woods indicate that ice may still be on the lake for the opening of fishing. The last time ice was on the main lake for the fishing opener was 1996.

The 2008 season is 204 GDD behind 2007 and 374 GDD behind 2006 season. Typically, mildew in bluegrass is the first disease of the season. In the last three years, mildew infestations have corresponded to the accumulation of approximately 650 GDD. How close will the 2008 season compare to the previous years? Field scouting will determine the actual incidence of pest outbreaks.

The next edition of the newsletter is scheduled to be released on May 20, 2008.