



Cutting Western Rye Grass on College Farm

Soil

Western Rye Grass can be grown on a great variety of soils, but it is found to thrive best on a moist sandy loam.

It will not stand excessive moisture as in the native meadows it was never found growing in the sloughs but around the edge where the water did not lie during the summer. While it gives the largest yield on moist loams it is well adapted to the drier and heavier soils and can be grown successfully where Timothy and Red Clover are killed by drought.

Place in Rotation

Western Rye is one of the easiest grass crops to work into the rotation. If the soil is badly exhausted it should only be sown on a summer fallow but if the soil is fertile and the season at all favorable good results can be obtained on stubble land. If sown on summer fallow a nurse crop can be used but if sown on stubble better results are obtained by seeding alone.

Preparation of the Seed Bed

The seed of the Western Rye is comparatively small and does not contain a large amount of plant food and therefore, requires a fine seed bed so that the young plant can begin to draw on the soil for its food in its early stages of growth. The soil should be firm underneath with a granular mulch about an inch or an inch and a half deep on top. This allows the moisture to rise close to the surface and the mulch prevents evaporation. Spring plowing, if it is packed, harrowed, and seeded the same day as plowed will give fair results. A well worked summer-fallow is the ideal preparation; the surface is fine, the subsurface firm, and the soil is moist and free from weeds.