

CORNER POST

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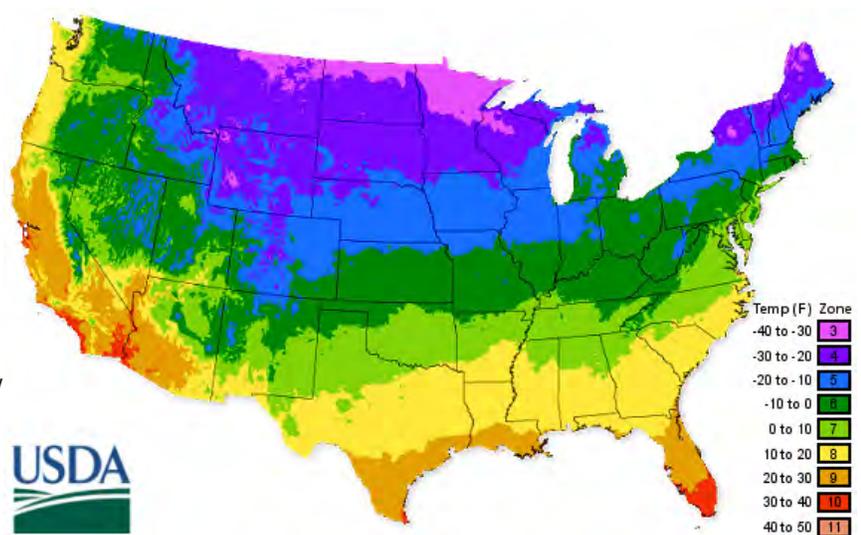
PERENNIAL FORAGE SEEDING TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

It is now mid-May and not uncommon for growers to ask about cut-off dates for spring planting perennial forages. When seeding spring small grains, the earlier you plant, the greater your likelihood of success and tonnage potential.

This applies especially to spring triticale and spring barley - however, the cut-off date for spring oats is only when the rotation doesn't allow for the 60-70 day window needed for oats to grow. Oats can tolerate the warmer, drier conditions of early summer better than spring barley or spring triticale.

While some growers may have not had the opportunity to begin planting spring forages, the window is starting to close in other regions (for perennial forages). Based upon things we've experienced and heard, here are a few points to consider:

- **Cut-off dates are not set in stone.** It is a moving target based on rainfall and subsequent soil moisture plus overall soil condition, soil temperature and the long-range weather outlook. Perhaps the most important consideration is the goal with this new crop and the rotation or timeline this goal falls into.
- **Get ahead of other forage growth.** Ideally, perennial seeds should get planted either at or before the surrounding forages start to wake up, providing maximum time to take advantage of spring weather (and early GDD's) and to get ahead of spring weed establishment - which can be detrimental to the success of many spring-planted forage seedings.
- **Consider the USDA zones as a possible guide.** We've heard from extension folks around the Midwest that spring seeding cut-off dates "theoretically" follow the USDA zones, with zone 4 landing around the end of May. For every zone you move south, take away 10 days to 2 weeks. That puts zone 5 (Interstate 80) around mid-May, and so on. Current weather patterns and forage needs will likely push these cut-off dates back a few weeks, if not more.



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