

Seedling Alfalfa Weed Control Guidelines

Seedling alfalfa needs to be scouted for weed and insect problems during the fall and winter months. Soon after alfalfa seedlings emerge scout the field for grass and broadleaf weed infestation. Cool season weeds continue to germinate until soil temperature falls in December. Recommendations are as follows:

If one competitive broadleaf weed or grass per square foot is found, spray in October or November. These weeds will significantly reduce alfalfa yields and will shorten stand life. Wheat, ryegrass and other cool season grasses can be controlled with Poast Plus or Select 2EC. Apply either product before the onset of cold weather. Mustards such as bushy wall flower, flaxweed, tasey mustard and pepperweed are common problems in fall planted alfalfa. These mustards can be effectively controlled with Butyrac 200 to actively growing rosettes in October and November. Winter broadleaf weeds such as henbit and chickweed do not need to be sprayed as they are not competitive with alfalfa. Also, post emergence herbicides are not effective on them.

If winter weeds are not controlled, it is important to schedule first cutting early to maximize hay quality and minimize damage to alfalfa from shading. Ideally, cut these stands in April when weedy grasses are in the boot stage.

If weeds are only a problem in borders of fields, then consider spraying only those areas.

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