

How to get a good stand of alfalfa or grass

A properly maintained Brillion or drill seeder can consistently get good forage stands while reducing seeding cost from \$40 to \$100 per acre.

- High seeding rates may be necessary with poor seeders since few seeds germinate.
- Lower seeding rates can be used with better seed placement and packing.
- Research has shown that, no matter how much is seeded, forage stands will thin to 25 to 35 plants per square foot by fall.

Seeder Calibration

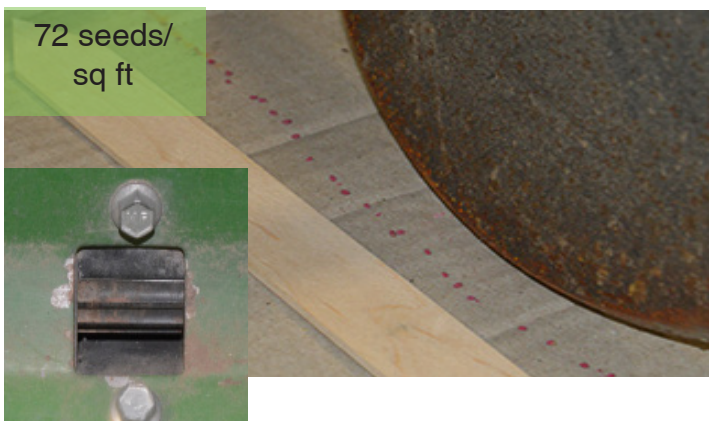
1. Different lots of seed flow at different rates as shown in this table where seeding rates of two different seeders were measured for different seed lots with no change in drill settings.

Variety/ Seed Lot	Brillon Seeder	John Deere Drill
	lbs seed/ acre	lbs seed/ acre
1	18.3	21.4
2	17.0	20.3
3	15.0	16.3
4	13.8	16.3
5	20.8	16.5
6	20.3	16.8

Ever run out of seed?
This could be why.

Calibrate seeder by monitoring acres seeded from first half of bag.

2. Worn seed metering devices may have different seeding rates for different rows. Box on right is seeding at twice the rate on the left.



Accurate meter.



Worn meter

Recommended maximum is 75 seeds/sq ft. Final desired plant count is 25 to 30 plants/sq ft at end of season.

Seeding Failures

1. Seeding depth – seeds must be placed at $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep. If deeper the seed may not be able to push the growing plant to the soil surface, if too shallow, soil moisture may not be adequate for germination

a. Brillion seeders will naturally place seed at the correct depth unless soil is crusted or too soft.

b. Drills with depth bands are best for keeping seed placement at consistent depth.

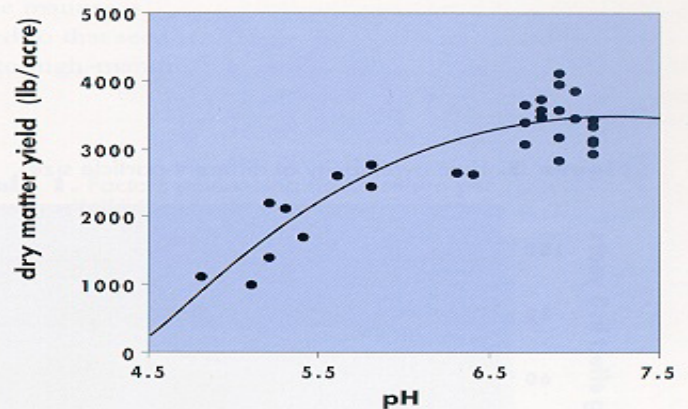


c. Press wheels close to disc opener are second best they reduce the disc crossing a furrow or ridge separately from the press wheel.



2. Soil pH must be 6.8 for alfalfa and 6 to 6.2 for grasses and clovers.

Figure 2. First-cutting alfalfa yield relative to soil pH.



Source: Wollenhaupt and Undersander, University of Wisconsin, 1991

3. Soil packing -- failure to pack soil around seed inhibits the seed's ability to take up soil moisture necessary for germination.

