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NF98-385 Returning CRP Land to Crops: Grass Management/ Cropping Suggestions for Land Released in Winter or Early Spring

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NebFact



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Returning CRP Land to Crops: *Grass Management/Cropping Suggestions for Land Released in Winter or Early Spring*

by CRP to Crops Research Team
Northeast Research and Extension Center*

Planting Suggestions

This NebFact gives grass control and planting recommendations for producers who learn in January that their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land applications have been denied and who wish to put the land into production the upcoming spring.

For detailed instruction on returning CRP land to crop production, see NF97-324, *Returning CRP Land to Crops: Cool-Season Grass Management/Cropping Suggestions*; and NF97-343, *Returning CRP Land to Crops: Warm-Season Grass Management/Cropping Suggestions*.

Due to the short time available to prepare for spring planting for CRP land released in winter or early spring, the following strategies are suggested:

Cool Season Grasses

1. Shred or mow the old grass residue to allow new grass growth as soon as possible.
2. When grass greens up, spray Roundup Ultra^a herbicide at 2 qts/acre or Touchdown 5^a at 1.6 qts/acre + 0.25 percent nonionic surfactant.
3. No-till plant or drill Roundup Ready soybeans.
4. Apply 1.5 qt/acre of Roundup Ultra^a herbicide for cool season grass escapes and annual grass and broadcast control.

Soybeans are the recommended crop to plant after CRP grass for several reasons; however, corn can be

grown with these additional considerations:

1. Choose a later planting date to allow the CRP sod to warm up.
2. Apply 2 qts/acre of atrazine in March before grass greens up to kill smooth brome. Atrazine is also an effective pre-emergence herbicide. (Note: Apply atrazine *only* to corn plots.)
3. Use Roundup Ready corn hybrids. If Roundup Ready seed is not available, consider using Liberty Link^b corn hybrids.
4. Increase the seed population by 10-15 percent over normal seed populations.
5. Increase nitrogen fertilizer rates by 50-80 lbs/acre above normal rates.

Warm Season Grasses

Warm season grass will not green up for spraying until mid-June, eliminating no-till row crop production as an option. Tilling warm season grasses is probably the only way to kill the grass, reduce residue, and level the seed bed in time to plant in the spring. However, because the soil surface can be rough and difficult to plant even after tilling, the best option is to shred and graze or hay for one season and kill the grass mid-season. Producers need to check with their local Farm Service Agency office for guidelines associated with residue management for future years. To protect soil quality gains, most farm plans will call for no-till planting of corn and soybeans in subsequent years.

- a. For Roundup Ultra or Touchdown 5 add 17 lbs ammonium sulfate (spray grade) per 100 gallons of spray. The ammonium sulfate is the first product added to the spray tank after water.
- b. Liberty only suppresses most perennial grasses.

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