

## **Bermuda FAQ's**

### **Is there a suggested protocol for planting seeded bermudagrass in fields with a history of weed problems?**

Competition from other grasses and weeds is the number one reason for bermudagrass stand failure. Taking steps upfront to reduce this competition will increase your chance of successful establishment. When planting in fields or paddocks with a history of weeds, don't get in a hurry to plant. If soil temperature is not consistently 65°F or higher at a depth of 4", bermudagrass will not germinate. When the seed does germinate it will be weaker and more susceptible to competition. Prepare the seedbed well in advance to allow the first flush of crabgrass and other weed and grass competition to emerge. Use a non-selective, non-residual herbicide such as glyphosate to kill this flush of weeds before planting seeded varieties of bermuda like Cheyenne II, Ranchero Frio or Mohawk. Once the bermuda becomes established, there are several herbicides that can be used to control many weed species.

### **Are there management techniques that can help insure successful seeded bermudagrass stand establishment?**

Yes. For quicker germination and more vigorous seedlings, seeded bermudagrass planting should be delayed until late spring when soil temperatures have stabilized at 65 degrees or higher. After the bermuda germinates and begins to tiller (develop runners), apply 30-40 lbs nitrogen/ac. Monitor broadleaf weed and summer annual grass emergence. If broadleaf weeds become troublesome, a low dose (1-1½ pts/A) of 2,4-D amine may be applied when the bermuda begins to develop runners. If broadleaf weeds become a problem before runners develop, mow the area as needed to reduce weed competition and shading of the seedling bermuda plants. Keep annual grasses and johnsongrass periodically mowed until the bermuda is well established. Do not graze or harvest for hay until the bermuda is 6-8" or more in height. If harvested for hay, leave at least a 2.0" - 2.5" of stubble height. Allow the bermuda to obtain a **minimum** of 3-4" of re-growth prior to a killing frost.

### **Can a field planted in seeded bermudagrass in late spring or early summer be overseeded with ryegrass in the fall?**

Pennington forage experts do not recommend overseeding newly established bermuda with winter annuals or clover the fall following spring planting. Bermuda roots and stolons need time to establish and mature prior to introducing competitive forages. In fact, if weather or other circumstances prevent the bermuda from becoming fully established during year one, it may be necessary to delay overseeding the field until the 3<sup>rd</sup> fall after planting.

### **Will Cheyenne II seeded-type forage bermudagrass revert back to common after only a few years of growth?**

No. Cheyenne II is a certified, stable variety. It is not a mixture or blend of seed containing common bermuda. As such, it remains as is; i.e. an excellent yielding, highly digestible, improved forage bermudagrass year after year.

### **What management practices are necessary to keep a bermuda stand thick and productive?**

To begin, take a soil sample to determine soil pH, phosphorus and potassium levels. While bermudagrass is considered a hardy and low maintenance forage, it cannot tolerate low soil fertility over long periods of time. To cut costs, farmers often apply ample amounts of nitrogen but fail to maintain proper soil pH and adequate soil levels of phosphorus and potassium. This leads to poor yields, plant decline and thinning stands. According to forage specialists, for every ton of bermuda hay taken per acre, approximately 45 lbs. of nitrogen, 10 lbs. of phosphorus and 48 lbs. of potash per acre are removed with it. Potassium is of particular importance because it is a key component of cell wall structure giving the plant improved winter hardiness and disease resistance. Potassium also increases rhizome and stolon production which allows bermuda stands to remain thick and productive.

### **What are the benefits of planting Cheyenne II rather than common bermuda?**

Cheyenne II is a consistently high yielding hybrid variety of seeded bermudagrass that is Penkoted to help ensure successful establishment. Cheyenne II will consistently produce more forage than common bermuda and has a high leaf-to-stem ratio necessary for the production of high quality hay. Cheyenne II is a certified, single variety that will not revert back to common bermuda over time.

### **What are the advantages of Penkoted seed?**

Penkote is Pennington's proprietary seed coating that contains limestone, fungicide, two bio-stimulants and green dye. Limestone creates a suitable pH around each seed. It also draws water to the seed to improve germination. The fungicide protects the germinating plant from several seedling diseases resulting in higher germination and more vigorous seedling growth. The bio-stimulants promote more rapid emergence and improve seedling vigor and survival. The green dye deters birds from eating seed that may be left on the soil surface during planting.

### **Can I thicken my existing bermudagrass stand with one of Pennington's seeded varieties?**

Yes. Pennington's Cheyenne II, Mohawk and Tierra Verde blend can be used successfully for this purpose. For best results, delay seeding until soil temperatures average 65 degrees or higher at a 4 inch depth in the spring. If seed are to be broadcast, the soil surface in the bare areas will need loosening prior to seeding by scratching with a finger drag or by light disking. Following seeding, a culti-packer or similar roller device should be used to press the seed into the soil and firm the ground. A no-till drill can be used, but extreme care should be taken not to plant the seed too deep. A seeding depth of 1/8" is recommended for seeded bermuda. If weeds become problematic, keep them mowed periodically to help reduce competition with the developing Bermuda seedlings. To further reduce competition from weeds and grasses, delay the application of fertilizers containing nitrogen until the bermuda seedlings have fully emerged. Refer to the flyer entitled "**Thickening Bermuda Stands**" in the Agriculture Section under the Forage Resources tab on the Pennington website [www.pennington.com](http://www.pennington.com).

### **Are there advantages to planting bermudagrass verses bahiagrass?**

While bahiagrass can produce ample amounts of forage under favorable conditions, its adaptation area is limited to roughly the southern half of the southeast. Bahiagrass forage is generally lower in quality than that of an improved variety of bermudagrass. Therefore, animal performance is generally higher on bermudagrass. Proper management of improved bermudagrass can produce forage with adequate nutritive quality for growing and lactating animals.

### **Are there advantages of using a seeded variety over a sprigged variety?**

Yes. Using a seeded variety allows flexibility to plant at any time when conditions are right for planting. There is no waiting for a custom sprigger to come and no exhaustive search for a source of sprigs. With favorable weather conditions, seeded varieties can quickly establish and provide forage utilization the year of establishment. Seeded varieties can be easily used to seed small acreages with existing equipment often found on the farm. Additionally, seeding bermuda is often significantly cheaper than sprigging.

### **How much production can I expect in the establishment year?**

First year production is entirely dependent on stand coverage, weather conditions and soil fertility. Studies have shown that Pennington's seeded varieties can product 1-2 tons of usable forage in the establishment year with proper fertilization, favorable temperatures and adequate rainfall.