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Balbo Rye

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service
HIGHER CROP YIELDS FROM
IMPROVED VARIETIES

Purdue University
Agricultural Extension Service

BALBO RYE

BALBO RYE is a rapid growing upright variety which reaches grazing height more quickly in both fall and spring than common rye. It blossoms and goes seed somewhat earlier than common rye. It imparts much less odor or taint to the milk of cows grazed on it than does ordinary rye. It is very popular among dairy men who use it for pasture. For pasture purposes, it may furnish as much as three to six weeks fall pasture after blue grass is gone and about the same period of grazing before permanent pasture is ready in the spring.

It was developed at the Tennessee Experiment Station from a small sample of unnamed seed from Italy, and was named after the famous Italian flyer. Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri certified seed growers are multiplying it. The annual Seed Directory, issued by the Seed Certification Service of Purdue lists the names of certified growers.

CARRYING CAPACITY:

Many Indiana farmers who have tried it for fall and spring pasture report that it carries a surprising amount of stock, is highly palatable and an excellent milk producer. It is sometimes referred to as "sweet" rye because of its superior quality for dairymen. In one trial in Tennessee, it was reported to furnish 40 percent more grazing before January 1st than ordinary rye. The average number of days grazing over a three year period in middle Tennessee was 169 for Balbo and 107 for common rye.

CULTURE:

For best results in furnishing late fall and winter pasture, the seedbed should be prepared as for winter wheat and the seed drilled about August 20, or as soon thereafter as possible, at five to six pecks per acre. Applications of 200 to 400 pounds of complete fertilizer, 4-12-8, 3-12-12 or 2-12-6, will stimulate fast early growth. Seeding may be as late as winter wheat when intended for spring grazing only. On light colored soils, especially the sandy types, a late winter top dressing of 25 pounds per acre of quick acting nitrogen will stimulate early growth and increase its protein content. It may easily displace an extra week's barn feeding in early spring.

Rye for grazing is especially well adapted to sandy soils and sandy loams although it may be grown on any soil type in the state. On sands it may be mixed with inoculated vetch which contributes some soil improvement, and the seed crops of the two may be harvested together.

In southern Indiana, a seeding of perennial rye grass with Balbo helps to provide a better turf for holding up animals on heavy soil. Seed of both may be obtained by delaying the rye harvest.
GRAZING MANAGEMENT:

Grazing may be started when plants are five inches high in either fall or spring. Heavy animals should be kept off when ground is soft from rain or thawing. If "Grassy odor in milk is troublesome, the cows should be removed from the pasture 2 to 3 hours before milking. This is advisable at the start to condition the cows.

HARVESTING SEED:

If grain is to be harvested, stock should be turned off in early April in southern and mid-April in northern Indiana in average seasons. Grazed rye is an excellent place to establish spring seeded legumes. Grasses in the legume mixture should be seeded with the rye in the fall and legumes in the spring. Some growers pasture the rye until it is jointing and harvest seed crops that are half the normal yield in spite of the heavy pasturing.

SEED SOURCES:

Since the seed cannot be distinguished from other rye varieties, and it cross-pollinates freely when not isolated from other rye, it is highly important that certified seed be planted whenever available to insure variety purity and the advantages of Balbo. Seed sources are usually available from the University, the County Agent's office, and often from local certified seed distributors. As grown in Indiana, the seed of Balbo is not as impressive as when grown in the southern states. It is usually rather small and lacking in plumpness.