

Best Management Practices for Converting from Tall Fescue

Guide for Fall and Spring Processes

Fall Applications

1. Glyphosate (ROUNDUP)

When applied in the fall, glyphosate will control 95% of tall fescue. Re-infestation will occur from seed unless seedheads were mowed in mid-May or early June before maturity.

a. Mow, hay or burn in July or August to reduce residue and ensure maximum exposure of new growth to herbicide contact.

b. Apply 1 qt./ac. glyphosate, plus 6-7oz. nonionic surfactant in 10-20 gal. water/ac. and 17 lb. ammonium sulfate/100 gal. solution, between Sept. 1 and Nov. 1 when fescue is 8-10 inches tall and actively growing (60- 70F).

c. Re-treat in April or May with 1 qt./ac. glyphosate. There will probably not be adequate growth for treatment before April 1 in the south zone, or April 15 in the north. A late winter or early spring burn may produce earlier growth.

d. Plant with no-till drill in moderate residue (never plant in heavy fescue residue). A standard grassland drill or air spreader may be used in light residue, or if residue is burned prior to seeding. Cultipack or tread with cattle after seeding with an air spreader. For tilled seedbeds, wait 7-14 days after the last herbicide application before disking.

e. Late spring (April 15 - May 15) seeding of Cool Season Grasses (CSG)/legumes is possible if all goes well. Native Warm Season Grasses(NWSG)/forbs should be seeded as early as possible to allow weather to heal cuts from residue coulters on most no-till drills. Drills with trash plows (Truax flex-drills) and standard drills do not leave deep cuts so planting may be later.



f. If seeding can't be completed before the deadline or because seed is not available, plant a summer smother-crop such as sorghum sudangrass or pearl millet for better fescue control or erosion protection. CSG/legume can be planted in the fall; NWSG/forbs in the dormant period or the following spring, leaving the cover crop mulch for protection.

g. Burn after the second growing season or after the first if no winter-heaving is evident.

2. Imazapic* (PLATEAU)

Imazapic is labeled for controlling tall fescue at 12 oz./ac./yr. Annual weed control will be less than if used in the spring. The only advantage of using imazapic in the fall is to reduce adverse effects on sideoats grama, eastern gamagrass and susceptible native forbs, e.g. compassplant and ashy sunflower.

a. Mow, hay or burn in July or August to reduce residue and ensure maximum exposure of new growth to herbicide contact.

b. Apply 12 oz. imazapic + 2 pints of methylated seed oil (MSO) per acre.

c. Plant NWSG and native forbs during the dormant period or following spring.

3. Glyphosate + Imazapic

This combination will give more consistent control of tall fescue than either product alone and will allow using a lower imazapic rate for sensitive forbs and NWSGs and for CRP land. Annual weed control will be less than if imazapic is used in the spring.

a. Apply 1qt./ac. glyphosate plus surfactant in the fall as described in steps 1a and b.

b. Burn residue in the spring and apply 4-8 oz./ac. imazapic and 2 pt./ac. MSO in 20 gal. of water/ac. a few days before or after planting. (Omit MSO if NWSG or forb seedlings have emerged.)

c. Switchgrass, eastern gamagrass, sideoats grama, and several native forbs may be stunted or killed by imazapic, especially at the higher application rates. Increase the seeding rate in mixtures that contain these species to allow for some plant loss.



Spring Applications

Using summer annuals in conversion process

1. Glyphosate

When applied in the spring, these will give 50-90% tall fescue control, but seedling recruitment, escapes and skips are problems with spring treatment without a second application.

a. Mow or burn residue in winter to encourage new growth.

b. Apply 2 qt./ac. glyphosate, plus 6-7oz. nonionic surfactant in 10-20 gal. water/ac. and 17 lb. ammonium sulfate/100 gal. of solution, when most plants have reached the boot to early seedhead stage.

c. Plant a summer annual (sohrgum-sudan or millet), terminate that in August, plant wheat or oats in the fall, terminate that in the spring, then no-till the NWSG

To Control Fescue or Smooth Brome in Native Grass or Forb Plantings After Establishment Year

<p>No forbs planted and native grass is dormant</p> <p>Fescue and smooth brome – use glyphosate rates shown in Fall Application.</p> <p>Desirable forbs present in planting</p> <p>Fescue – Clethodim (Select)</p> <p>Apply 10-12 oz/ac. With crop oil concentrate at 1qt/ac., apply a spray grade ammonium sulfate at 2.5lbs/ac. Apply when fescue has 4-6 inches</p>	<p>of new growth and native grasses are dormant. Grazing restrictions apply.</p> <p>Smooth brome – Fluazifop-p-butyl (Fusilade DX)</p> <p>Apply Fusilade DX Herbicide at 16-24 fl oz/ac for control of annual and perennial grasses at 6-10 inches in new growth, but before seedheads form. Native grasses should be dormant. Add crop oil concentrate at 1% v/v (1 gal/100 gal) or nonionic surfactant at 0.25-0.5% v/v (1-2 qt/100 gal) in the finished spray volume.</p>
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in mid-May.

d. If performing a dormant broadcast, plant spring oats in the fall and broadcast the NWSG in February. The spring oats would winter kill and not be an issue in the spring.

2. Glyphosate + Imazapic

This combination gives better fescue control than either herbicide by itself plus

annual grass control, reducing the need for weed-control mowings. It is the most efficient and cost-effective method.

a. Apply 1 to 2 qt/ac. glyphosate, plus 6-7 oz./ac. nonionic surfactant, in 10-20gal. water/ac., and 17 lb. ammonium sulfate/100 gal. of solution when tall fescue is 8-10 inches tall.

b. Wait 7-14 days, burn killed residue, plant NWSG mixture and apply 4-8 oz/ac of imazapic.

Always read and follow labels when using pesticides. Labels can be found at <https://www.greenbook.net/> Pay attention to grazing and/or haying restrictions after herbicide application.

Note: REQUEST, an Ammonium Sulfate replacement product, is available through ag chemical dealers.