

PLANTING AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WHEAT

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Introduction

Wheat can be used as either a forage or grain crop. When used for forage, wheat can provide early grazing for livestock. Successful wheat production requires the use of management practices that contribute to high yields of forage or grain. Planting practices and management decisions made during the planting season are crucial for good stand establishment, winter survival and production.

Planting Dates

The LSU AgCenter recommendations for planting wheat are as follows:

Forage: September 20 to October 15

Grain: October 15 to November 15 (North LA)
November 1 to November 30 (Central and South LA)

Planting wheat earlier than the recommended planting dates will subject the plants to greater insect and disease pressure and also make the plants more prone to winter injury. Although wheat emerges sooner and the shoot develops faster in warm soil (75 to 80 degrees), the root system develops much faster and more extensively if the soil is cool (55 to 60 degrees).

Planting Methods, Rates and Depths

When planting wheat for forage, a seeding rate of 90 pounds per acre should be used. The seed can be broadcast on top of the ground, and then lightly disked or harrowed to cover the seed. For proper emergence and a vigorous stand, plant the seed at a depth of 1 to 2 inches. Planting seeds shallower than 1 inch may result in uneven germination and emergence due to the drying of the soil. For grain production, planting with a grain drill is the preferred method because it allows uniform depth of planting and results in a more uniform stand. A seeding rate of 60-90 pounds per acre of high quality seed planted into a good seedbed with adequate moisture is satisfactory. Adjust the seeding rate up to about 90 pounds per acre for broadcast planting, late planting, or planting into a poorly prepared seedbed.