

TALL FESCUE

fraydo



Fraydo (*Festuca arundinaceae*) is a deep-rooted, densely tillered Mediterranean Fescue. It has an erect growth habit with a long stem and short spikes relative to other cultivars. Fraydo has very strong seedling vigour which makes it relatively easy to establish compared to other Fescue varieties. It demonstrates strong winter activity along with a high level of summer dormancy. This combination allows Fraydo to be very productive in temperate rainfall regions whilst providing excellent persistence in hot, dry summer conditions and protection against false breaks.

Fraydo is well suited to a range of soil types and can tolerate short periods of waterlogging. It is especially productive for a 7–8 month growing season with moderate to high rainfall. As Fraydo is a soft leaf type it will provide higher quality feed that is suitable to all classes of stock compared to tough leaf types. Fraydo has demonstrated good levels of Crown and Stem Rust resistance.

CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Deep rooted, densely tillered mediterranean type**
- ✓ **Very drought tolerant**
- ✓ **Excellent rust resistance**
- ✓ **Strong seedling vigour and early growth**
- ✓ **Highly palatable with outstanding winter growth**

RAINFALL

Fraydo is suited to temperate regions that receive 500mm+ annual rainfall and irrigation.

SOIL TYPE

Fraydo is suited to a wide range of soil types from sandy loams to heavy clays, but prefers medium to heavy clay soils. Fraydo prefers soil pH 5.0–8.0 (CaCl₂) and has low to moderate tolerance of soil aluminium (<15%) and salinity (<8dS/m [ECe]).

REGENERATION

Good management in early spring while the Fraydo is in the vegetative stage ensures excellent regrowth. When plants are in the vegetative stage, grass shoots should show no sign of seed head development in the basal zone.

When plants are at this stage it is suggested they are allowed to grow to 15–20cm then graze to 5cm tall. Then allow regrowth back to 10–15cm tall. If left longer, plants will become fibrous with decreasing digestibility. For hay or silage, allow plants to reach the boot stage before mechanical harvesting.

GRAZING

Tall Fescue germinates and establishes more slowly than some other cool-season grasses and grazing too soon can seriously damage new stands. It is very important to ensure plants have a well established root system prior to grazing. Grazing Fraydo too soon will significantly reduce plant population and possibly result in stand failure.

Once established, Fraydo should be managed to prevent the build up of over grown, rank herbage. If not managed correctly it will not be attractive to stock but more importantly a significant decline in nutrition will result. Stands should be maintained between 4–12cm tall (active growth range). This will maximise growth rates, aid in recovery and maintain good feed and nutrition levels.

Set stocking of Tall Fescue is not recommended, except for established stands during the winter period, as selective grazing of Fescue plants can result in poor persistence. It is best to avoid grazing during periods of drought as this will help enhance plant persistence and improve recovery once rainfall is received.



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WEED CONTROL

Fraydo has strong seedling vigour compared to other Tall Fescue varieties, but establishment relative to other pasture species is slow. Correct paddock preparation is extremely important to ensure successful establishment. Any winter grasses need to be controlled in the year before sowing. Spray topping in the spring prior to sowing is often effective. Failure to ensure proper weed management can result in either partial or complete failure of the stand.

DISEASE RESISTANCE

Fraydo demonstrates excellent rust resistance to Crown (*Puccinia coronata*) and Stem Rust (*Puccinia graminis*).

PEST RESISTANCE

Fraydo can be damaged by Blue Oat Mite (*Penthaleus major*), Red Legged Earth Mite (*Halotydeus destructor*), Field Crickets (*Teleogryllus commodus*), Slugs and Snails. It can also suffer from Pasture Scarabs (*Sericosthis spp.*) although Fraydo is more tolerant of this than other grass species. Appropriate management of these insects is vital for successful stands, particularly during the establishment period.

SOWING RATE

When sowing alone to produce a dense sward, sow at a minimum of 10–15kg/ha under dry land conditions and 15–20kg/ha under high rainfall or irrigated conditions. In pasture mixtures Fraydo should be sown at 6–15kg/ha.

If sowing Fraydo for seed production it is suggested that a rate of 5–10kg/ha is used.

Optimum time for sowing is early to late autumn after break of the season. Sow at a depth of 1.0–2.0cm into a moist seedbed, free of broadleaf and grass weeds.

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