



Texas Agricultural Extension Service

The Texas A&M University System

Suggested Forage Seeding Rate Targets for West Texas

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Little research and a lot of inconsistencies! That describes the available information regarding forage seeding rates for the Southern High Plains. The table below is a summary of limited Texas Agriculture Extension Service data as well as information from various seed development and sales representatives, seed company literature, and local farm stores. Keep in mind that many forage varieties do have specific seeding rate information which should be taken into account.

Many forage growers underestimate the ability of different forages to “flex” or respond to environmental conditions when seeding rates are lower. Thus producers may tend to bump seeding rates upward and slightly increasing their costs. Tillering, stem size, and leaf size at what seems to be somewhat lower plant populations can do an adequate job of compensating when seedling emergence is low, lower seeding rates are used, or when growing conditions are very favorable.

The following table may be used as a guide in choosing targeted seeding rates for different forages in the Southern High Plains. See what guidelines your local seed dealer offers. Be sure to verify seed size. Targeted rates may range by a few pounds pending drill accuracy and field conditions, which may affect achieving a stand. Also, steminess can be controlled with slightly higher seeding rates though lodging could become a problem for some forage types and varieties including the brown mid-rib (BMR) forages. Due to lodging potential, particularly for BMRs, seeding rates and even applied N levels might be more conservative (this is more a concern for hay and silage than for grazing uses). Seeding rates are usually slightly higher for grazing vs. hay or silage production.

The following targeted rates reflect +/- 5 lbs./A for seeding rates of 20 lbs./A or more, and +/- 2 lbs./A for seeding rates of 10 lbs./A or less. Seeding rates at 20” are intermediate between narrow and wide spacings.

Type	Typical seeds per lb.	Dryland		Irrigated	
		----- Row Spacing in Inches-----			
		20” or more	6-20”	20” or more	6-20”
		----- Lbs./Acre -----			
Sorgo-sorghum/sudan	24,000-26,000	8	12	12	20
Sorgo-sorghum/sudan	20,000-22,000	9	13	12-15	20-25
Conventional sorghum/sudan	16,000-17,000	10	15	15	25
Forage sorghum--silage	16,000	8	--	12	20
--grazing	16,000	12	15	20	25
Brown mid-rib (BMR) forage sorghum or sorghum/sudan	16,000	7-10	10-15	10-15	18-25
Photoperiod sensitive sorghum/sudan	16,000	10	15	15	25
Hybrid pearl millet	80,000-90,000	5-6	8-10	6-8	12-15

Notes: Seeding rates for ~20” rows might be intermediate in lbs./A.