**Establishing Galega**

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Galega, a perennial forage legume from the Scandinavian countries, has several advantages over alfalfa, including higher dry matter yield, better feed quality (higher protein content), higher persistence and smothering of even perennial weeds such as Dandelions and Thistles and it is ready to be harvested a week before alfalfa. The only downside of Galega is that it cannot compete with the weeds during the establishment stage as well as alfalfa does. Last year, we conducted an experiment at LUARS comparing some cultural and chemical methods of weed control in Galega. The results (LUARS Annual Report 2018, Page 158) revealed that uncontrolled check (without any weed control) accumulated 2,367 kg dry matter of weeds/ha at weeds maturity. The three treatments that gave complete weed control with zero weeds dry matter were:

* Seeding Galega in mid July after a Roundup burn down of weeds
* Seeding Galega after barley harvested at boot stage, and
* Galega sprayed post-emergence with Basagram Forte @ 1.75 l/ha

However, Basagram Forte had a burning effect on Galega canopy and it did kill some Galega plants. Seeding Galega after allowing the weeds to emerge in the spring and burning them down by Roundup lowered the weeds dry matter by 60 % and that sprayed with Pursuit @ 210 ml/ha + Ag-Surf @ 0.25 % post emergence lowered the weeds dry matter by 46 % as compared to the check treatment. I feel that a combination of Basagram Forte and Pursuit at half the rate of each herbicide could work better than the two herbicides applied alone/singly. We will try this treatment this year. Galega wasn’t harvested in the establishment year 2018 and hence we wouldn’t know about the dry matter yield of Galega in different treatments till the end of Season 2019 when we will harvest Galega and analyze the data.

Based on the results so far, I would recommend seeding Galega either after allowing the weeds to emerge in spring and killing the weeds before seeding or seed Galega after killing the weeds in mid July or seed Galega after harvesting spring seeded barley at the boot stage (~ 60 days after seeding barley). In the latter case, the advantage would be that the farmers wouldn’t have to loose a crop in the establishment year of Galega. In the southern Ontario, because of relatively longer season, farmers could probably seed Galega after harvesting barley for silage.

*Add Galega to your cropping systems; it is a very good crop both for soils and livestock!*

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