

**FSM  
Brand**

# Insights™

**Fowler Seed Marketing**

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## *Amazing* Italian Ryegrass

High Quality - Versatile - Cost-Effective

As a general characteristic, a true "Italian" ryegrass, planted after frost-risk in the spring, will not produce heads during the first season of growth. As a result, each harvest during the seeding year and the first harvest the second year (before heading) have the potential for tremendous digestible energy content and overall feed quality.



Provided with adequate nutrients and moisture, Italian ryegrass can produce several tons of high quality dry matter every 30-45 days from June through October. Dry matter yields of 10 ton per acre were recorded several years ago at the University of Minnesota. Net energy levels can approach the value of corn in a ruminant diet combined with the rumen buffering effect of 'rumen-effective' fiber.

There are a number of ways to utilize Italian ryegrass. It can be planted straight or with red clover from May through August as a rotational forage or soil-building cover crop. Italian ryegrass can be drilled into a weak hay stand or pasture after 1<sup>st</sup> cutting/grazing as a one-year boost. We include it as a 'quick-catch' component in all our summer production in those areas and around hay rings.

Best of all, Italian ryegrass is relatively inexpensive to plant. Even when planted at the full rate of 40 pounds per acre in less than ideal conditions, cost per ton of dry matter produced are typically less than \$15 (compared to corn silage at \$20 or more). It has aggressive rooting characteristics that scavenge nutrients left from previous crops and manure while building soil structure and organic matter. The University of Wisconsin discovered that Italian ryegrass was a better 'pre-crop' for corn than alfalfa, soybeans, or corn making it a 'two (forage and cover crop) for the price of one' investment.



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