

Re-seeding Dead Pastures

Dead spots in the pasture. Maybe it was due to drought. Maybe grubs or other insects damaged the roots. Maybe cheatgrass overtook the good grass. Or overgrazing finally did in certain areas. Whatever the reason, dead or thin patches in pastures need to be reclaimed and fit back into your grazing program. If you just let them be, weeds will overrun the area and spread into your good grass. Re-seeding these areas follows the same basic guidelines as planting a whole new pasture.

Prepare a firm, weed-free seedbed. This might require very vigorous tillage or spraying first to kill existing weeds. Be sure to pack the soil after any tillage before planting. Then plant with appropriate equipment that places seed just slightly below the soil surface on the right date.

Your biggest challenges are selecting the seed to use and keeping cattle out while new seedlings develop. To determine what to seed, first decide if this patch will be part of a larger pasture or will it be a whole new area. If part of the larger pasture it is critical that you plant the same kind of plants that will be next to it when you add it back to the existing pasture. If instead you plant something they like better, they'll overgraze it. If they don't like it as well, they'll not use it.

Then be sure to fence animals out until new plants are well established. **AND I MEAN WELL ESTABLISHED.** Graze too soon and animals will pull out or trample apart your new grass, making you start over. But done correctly, dead patches can become good pasture very quickly.

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