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What is Autotoxicity?

**Alfalfa Farmers,
For Years,
Have Asked The
Following Questions!!!**

**Can I successfully follow
alfalfa with alfalfa?**

Or

**Can I over-seed alfalfa into a thinning alfalfa
stand to increase it's yield and longevity?**



**The Answer to both questions is not easy since
in practice**

sometimes it works

and

sometimes it doesn't.

**Failure in most cases has been blamed on a
phenomenon called autotoxicity.**

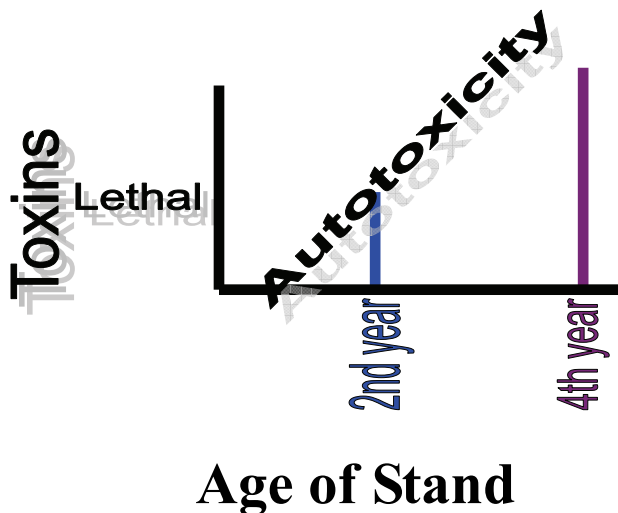
What Is Autotoxicity?

The situation in which established alfalfa plants produce a toxin that prevents new alfalfa seedlings from germinating, surviving, or growing. Surviving plants may not out-grow long term effects which may result in reduced plant density and yield loss.



How Do I Avoid Autotoxicity Damage?

Toxins build up in soil over time, and are generally considered a potential problem in fields 2 years and older. Following alfalfa with alfalfa or the practice of over seeding alfalfa into existing stands, is generally Not Recommended after a alfalfa field has been in production for 2 years.



If You Have To Follow Alfalfa With Alfalfa...

- ▶ New alfalfa fields can be reseeded during the first year with minimal risk to thicken an initial poor stand.
- ▶ Extent of toxins effect from a previous alfalfa field increases with age of a old field and density of previous stand.
- ▶ Toxins are water soluble and may be leached from the root zone, especially in well drained soils (sandy).
- ▶ Rotating one year out of alfalfa is optimal. Otherwise allow as much time as possible between disking an old field and planting the new one. Minimum of 3-4 weeks, but fall plow and spring plant is preferred.
- ▶ Replant with improved disease resistant variety coated with fungicide seed treatment to avoid damping off problems from pathogen build up in previous field.
- ▶ Autotoxicity toxin break down is faster in warm moist conditions.
- ▶ Preliminary planting of a small test strip in the field or greenhouse may identify any potential autotoxicity problems.

**For Additional Information
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