

**January 24, 2003**

**MEMORANDUM**

**To: County Agricultural Agents**

**From: Chad D. Lee and James H. Herbek**  
**Grain Crops Extension Specialists**

**Subject: Spring Oats for Kentucky**

We have already received inquiries concerning spring oats for Kentucky. As you know, this is the only small grain crop that should be seeded in the spring. They are excellent as a companion crop for establishing legumes or as a supplemental hay or silage crop. There are cover crop spring oats available and are usually labeled as variety unknown. If they are to be grown for seed or grain, then the varieties that are resistant to red leaf disease should be used.

The varieties that are available again this year in Kentucky will be Larry and Ogle. These have been on the market for several years, but the newer releases are not much better. Most people are familiar with Larry and Ogle and seed dealers do not want new names unless they are superior. The two new varieties are Jay from Indiana and Armor from Ohio. Larry and Ogle have excellent barley yellow dwarf virus resistance (red leaf disease in oats). Ogle is better for grain production and Larry is slightly taller and excellent for forage. Either variety will do well in Kentucky.

The forage best seeding rate is 3 bushels per acre. The companion crop seeding rate should be no more than 2.5 bushels per acre. March 1 until early in April is the best time to plant spring oats in Kentucky. Oats planted closest to March 1 should yield the best crop.