

NOTE ON PHOSPHATE AVAILABILITY AFTER GUATEMALA GRASS

By

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On one of the St. Coombs experimental clearings, which had been under Guatemala grass for a period of two years, it was found that on removing the grass it was impossible to establish leguminous green manures quickly.

The rapid establishment of a good cover of green manure bushes is essential after removing the grass to prevent undue heating of the soil by exposure to strong sunshine.

The trouble was traced eventually to lack of available phosphate in the soil. Since the grass had received very considerable amounts of mixed fertilizer during its two years of growth it would appear that all the available phosphate in the soil had been taken up by the grass and stored in the leaves and roots.

Consequently it seems advisable, when planting green crops, in areas which have been rested under Guatemala grass, to supply adequate amounts of inorganic manures to ensure good establishment. Probably the best way of applying the manure, to minimise weed growth, is to draw two parallel drills, some 3 inches apart, placing the seeds in one drill and the manure mixture in the other. A satisfactory manure mixture for this purpose would be :—

Sulphate of ammonia	—	3 parts
Superphosphate (20%)	—	2 parts
Muriate of potash (50%)	—	1 part,

applied at a rate of 1 cwt. per acre.