Drop Spreader Calibration

Turf Trust® is packed with everything your lawn needs to look amazing. A lawn fertilizer as good as Turf Trust® deserves to be applied properly for amazing results.

There are literally hundreds of spreaders on the market, and each one has its own unique characteristics that affect their application rate. On top of that, your terrain and walking pace can change the application rate dramatically. The mechanical condition of your spreader will also affect the flow rate, making It is next to impossible to provide accurate spreader setting estimates.

Drop Spreaders use gravity, with the help of a rotating agitator to allow material to fall through slide gate openings at the bottom of the hopper. The larger the opening, the faster the flow rate. The rotating agitator can reduce the size of fertilizer granules. This is especially important with Turf Trust®, since more than 50% of the nitrogen is in the controlled release form. Try to minimize any movement of the spreader other than when you are actually applying Turf Trust®.

With all of the potential variations of lawn terrain, condition of your spreader, your walking pace, the relative humidity, the only way to determine a truly accurate setting for your drop spreader is to calibrate it.

With a few simple calculations, it is easy to calibrate your drop spreader to apply Turf Trust® at the recommended rate. Here's what you need:

1. Pen & Paper
2. Tape Measure
3. Sticks or flags to mark test strip
4. Digital Scale
5. Clean bucket or container capable of holding 6 lbs. of Turf Trust®

STEP 1: Turn your spreader over and measure the width of the drop area of your spreader and write it down.

STEP 2: Select and mark a test strip in your lawn. Choose an area where you can apply in a straight line at least 50 feet long. The longer the test strip, the more accurate the results. Mark the start and stop areas of your test strip.

a) If the width of the drop area of your spreader is 24 inches (2 feet) and your test strip is 100 feet long, your test strip covers 200 sq. ft. (2 feet wide x 100 feet long)

STEP 3: Determine the required pounds per 1,000 sq. ft. The recommended application rate for Turf Trust® is 3.12 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. (A 5,000 sq. ft. coverage bag of Turf Trust® weighs 15.6 lbs. 15.6 lbs. ÷ 5 = 3.12 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft.)

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STEP 4: Weigh out a test amount of Turf Trust®

a) Place a clean bucket or pail on a digital scale. Write down the weight of the empty bucket or pail. Slowly and gently pour Turf Trust® into the pail or bucket until you have approximately 6 lbs. of Turf Trust® into the pail or bucket. (For example: If the empty bucket weighs 2 lbs., when the scale reads 8 lbs, you have 6 lbs. of Turf Trust® in the bucket. You want to have more Turf Trust® than you actually need for the test strip so the Turf Trust® will flow properly.

b) Write down the total weight of the container + the Turf Trust®

STEP 5: Using the setting adjustment on your spreader, adjust until the flow gate openings are approximately 1/4 inch. Write down the setting. Open and close the flow gate several times, then re-check the measurement. If necessary, adjust the settings to maintain a 1/4-inch opening.

STEP 6: Move your spreader to the start of your test strip. Make sure the flow gate is closed. Place the measured amount of Turf Trust® into the hopper.

STEP 7: Open the flow gate as you start walking. Try to walk at a comfortable, repeatable pace. Your walking pace affects the flow rate.

STEP 8: Close the flow gate as you get to the STOP marker on your test strip.

STEP 9: Pour the remaining Turf Trust® into the container and weigh it.

a) Subtract the weight of the remaining Turf Trust® from the initial weight. This tells you to how many pounds of Turf Trust® you applied to the test strip.

STEP 10: Calculate the pounds of Turf Trust® applied per sq. ft.

EXAMPLE:

The weight of 6 lbs of Turf Trust® + the container = 8 lbs. The weight of the Turf Trust® + the bucket that remained in the spreader after applying to the test strip = 7.2 lbs.
Spreader drop area was 24 inches wide and the test strip was 100 feet long.
(2 feet x 100 feet = 200 sq. ft.)

- Initial weight - after weight = 8 lbs. - 7.2 lbs = 0.8 lbs. applied to test strip.
- 0.8 lbs. x 1,000 sq. ft. ÷ 200 sq. ft. test strip area = 4 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft.

The recommended rate for Turf Trust® is 3.12 lbs per 1,000 sq. ft. In this example, you would close the flow gate slightly and check again on another test strip.

Calibration may seem involved, but this method considers spreader model, mechanical condition, walking pace, and lawn terrain to determine the correct setting. Turf Trust® is exceptional fertilizer and you don't want to waste it by over applying.