

Foraging Around



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First the Seed - Forage Grasses

In my last column I took you on a very brief tour into the seed producing areas for several important forage legumes. Today I'd like to do the same for several cool season forage grasses.

Timothy

Variable amounts of common timothy seed are produced in New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia. However, for the most part seed production in these areas is a by-product of the hay industry. If the standing crop is no longer suitable for hay, or is not needed for forage, it may be left and a seed crop harvested. Thus, both seed yields and seed quality are highly variable and the amount of seed available each year is uncertain.

Today four states (Minnesota, Missouri, Idaho and Ohio) are the primary producers of certified seed of named varieties, with the largest seed acreage in Minnesota. Canada is also a supplier of timothy seed.

Seed production and certification procedures for improved grass varieties, including timothy, are nearly as sophisticated as those for improved legume varieties. In Minnesota, for example, timothy seed fields are either row or solid planted to

foundation or registered seed on properly isolated weed-free fields. Fertility programs for lime, phosphate and potash are based on soil test with nitrogen applied at rates of 80-100 pounds per acre annually to assure top seed yields. Seed fields are harvested, swathed and allowed to dry in the swath prior to combining. Seed yields range from 250-600 pounds/acre.

Orchardgrass

Virginia still produces a small amount of orchardgrass seed. But of the improved varieties, including Pennlate, nearly 100 percent is produced in the state of Oregon where conditions are normally extremely favorable for grass seed production.

Extreme care is taken to select fields for seed production that are weed free of other grasses. Seed fields are row planted (18" - 24" rows) and critically inspected to assure purity. As with timothy, orchardgrass seed fields are harvested, swathed and allowed to dry in the swath prior to combining. Thus no artificial drying of the seed is necessary.

Post harvest burning or other residue removal is an important management step to minimize weed seeds and prepare the field for the application of a soil active herbicide.

Bromegrass

Smooth bromegrass in its area of adaptation is still one of the best cool-season grasses for forage. Yet for several reasons usage of this species has declined in recent years.

Kansas, Nebraska and South Dakota are major seed producers of common bromegrass as well as certified seed. But Washington and Idaho are currently important producers of certified seed of improved varieties.

Seed production practices in certified seed fields are, of course, closely monitored. For seed production purposes smooth bromegrass is commonly narrow row planted without a legume and fertilized similar to seed fields of other grasses. Seed fields may be direct combined if conditions are excellent, or mowed and picked up by the combine after the seed has dried in the swath.

Burning or removal of post harvest residue has proven to be an important practice in bromegrass seed fields in the Northwest to maintain seed yields and control certain weeds and diseases.

Reed Canarygrass

Historically, common reed canarygrass seed production was strictly a by-product of the hay industry in Minnesota and the Dakotas. But with the introduction of new varieties such as Palaton, up-to-date seed certification and production practices are in place. Minnesota and the Dakotas continue to be the major seed production states.

While solid stands for seed production are still common, row planting is the rule with most recent varieties. Seed shatter has always been a problem with this species but newer varieties tend to shatter less and tend to have higher seed weight per panicle. Seed fields are commonly direct combined and seed usually must be dried to prevent heating.

Because of the shattering and weather-related problems in major seed production areas, seed yields of reed canarygrass continue to be variable.

Tall Fescue

Last year nearly 95 percent of the tall fescue seed was produced in the states of Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee and Kansas on fields managed for both forage and seed. Missouri alone supplied over 80 percent of the total seed crop. Again as newer improved varieties such as Johnstone become available, and as the production of endophyte-free seed increases, certified seed production is slowly shifting to the more favorable seed production areas of the Northwest using modern seed production techniques.

Fescue seed is harvested from solid stands in the upper south while row plantings with careful post harvest management including refuse removal is the rule in Oregon. As a result average seed yields in Oregon are approximately 2½ times the national average.

Other Cool Season Forage Grasses

Virtually 100 percent of the U.S. ryegrass seed supply is grown in

the Willamette Valley of Oregon using improved practices to control weeds and diseases including controlled burning or other methods for removal of residue.

Prior to 1900 nearly all commercial Kentucky Bluegrass seed was produced in Kentucky from pastures. Today, however, most U.S. grown quality seed of improved varieties is a specialized business with production in Oregon, eastern Washington and northern Idaho, and some production in Minnesota. Innovations in weed control and other management practices have been instrumental in higher yields of quality seed.

Thus, today for both forage legumes and grasses, seed production is a very specialized business. And with continued modern seed production practices eastern consumers are assured of a constant supply of high quality seed of improved varieties.

May I take this opportunity to wish each of you a successful and profitable 1986.

USDA announces producer assessments for Ohio, Wisconsin tobacco

WASHINGTON, D.C. — To obtain price support on 1985-crop cigar filler and binder tobaccos (types 42-44 and 53-55), producers must agree to pay assessments on all marketings for deposit in "no net cost" tobacco accounts, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said recently.

Everett Rank, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, said the assessments were approved in consultation with tobacco producer associations, as: ten cents per pound for Ohio filler (types 42-44); three cents per pound for northern Wisconsin binder (type 55) and two

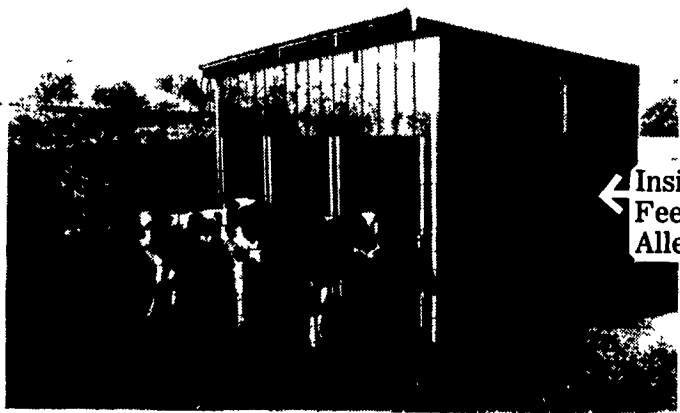
cents per pound for southern Wisconsin binder (type 54).

"The assessments ensure that the tobacco support program for these tobaccos will be operated at no net cost to the taxpayer, in conformity with the No Net Cost Tobacco Program Act of 1982," Rank said.

Producers who do not agree to contribute to the no net cost account will be ineligible for price support and subject to a penalty of 81 cents per pound for filler and binder tobaccos, he said.

The penalty equals 75 percent of 1984's average market price and is the same penalty that applies to the marketing of excess tobacco.

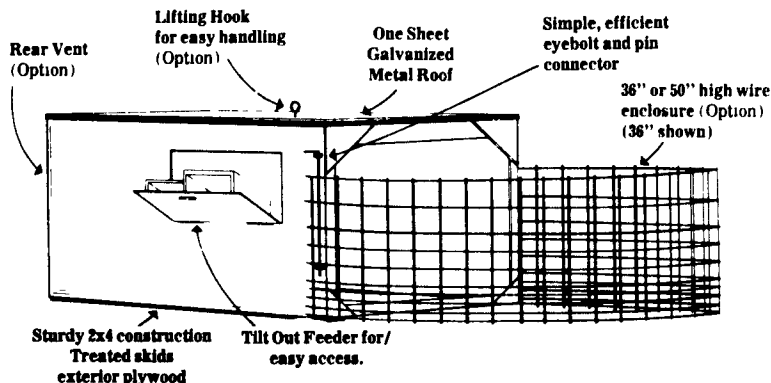
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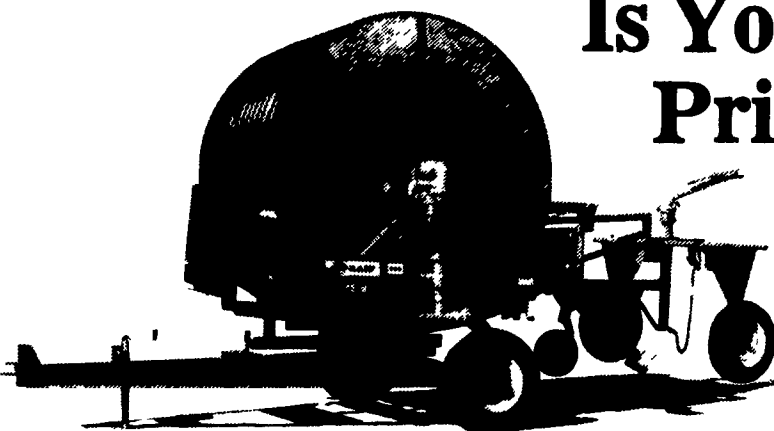


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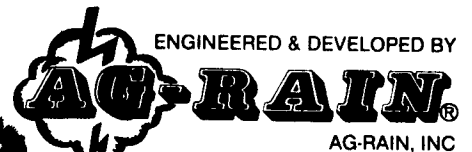
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