

Foraging Around



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Forage Seed Supplies For 1993
Another growing season has come to an end. And it's time to plan for the next year. High quality forage continues to be the backbone of the feeding program for all classes of livestock. So let's start by taking a brief look at forage seed supplies for 1993.

Alfalfa

If you're in the market to replace old alfalfa stands, 1993 may just be the year to do it. According to seed sources around the U.S., overall supplies of our improved proprietary (privately developed) varieties have never been better. In fact, with the 1992 seed crop along with carryover seed, assuming normal seed usage, there's at least a two year supply of high quality alfalfa seed

just waiting to be used. And that includes the best germplasm the industry has to offer. That doesn't mean there may not be spot shortages of new varieties hitting the market for the first time. But overall the choices are many and prices will remain about the same as last year.

On the other hand, supplies of common alfalfas will be short and prices higher. Last year many alfalfa growers purchased seed strictly on a price basis. This year, be sure to study the data for your area and select your varieties based on performance (yield, quality, and persistence). Remember seed cost represents a very small percentage of the total cost of growing alfalfa when prorated over the expected life of stand.

You can't afford to buy "cheap" seed!

Red Clover

Seed of improved red clover varieties is a different story. There was a short seed crop in 1992 of the improved privately developed double crop varieties. Thus, seed supplies are expected to be tight and prices up. So if red clover is your forage legume, it will pay you to make your decision early and place your seed order soon for next spring. Seed supplies of single cut varieties, on the other hand, are adequate.

Other Legumes

Seed supplies of improved varieties of Birdsfoot Trefoil are short and prices will be up. Seed producers of birdsfoot trefoil faced the same weather conditions in 1992 that you did. And for the most part those conditions spelled disaster for seed production. You can, therefore, expect to see more imported seed on the market this winter along with some blending of imported seed lots with improved varieties. Overall, imported lots are less likely to be adapted for your conditions and should be avoided. So work closely with your supplier to be sure you're getting the variety and seed quality you want.

Seed supplies of other legumes — ladino clover, alsike clover, and sweet clover — should be adequate to meet demand and prices are expected to remain about the same as a year earlier.

Forage Grasses

Seed supplies of our cool season grasses are a mixed bag, espe-

cially for improved name varieties.

• For orchardgrass, 1992 Oregon seed crop (our main production area) was down, and thus seed supplies of all improved varieties are short with prices up.

• Timothy seed supplies of both named varieties and common are expected to be barely adequate. Prices will be up slightly.

• Bromegrass is about the same story — improved varieties in short supply and prices up slightly. Seed of common bromegrass, on the other hand, is expected to be adequate, but quality may vary.

• There is, however, better news for reed canarygrass. After several years of very short seed supplies of the low alkaloid variety *Palaton*, there will be more seed available for 1993 plantings. Prices should remain unchanged.

• Seed supplies of low endophyte tall fescue varieties are also expected to be adequate with stable prices. The same should be true for Kentucky 31.

It's too early to forecast weather conditions for next summer. But, based on normal usage, there should be adequate seed supplies of most summer annual forage crops. And prices are expected to remain unchanged.

Finally

Over the past years I have thoroughly enjoyed keeping in touch with forage growers in *Lancaster Farming* country through "Foraging Around". But sooner or later, time catches up with all of us. And so it is with me.

I have, therefore, reluctantly decided that this should be my last regular column in *Lancaster Farming*. However, should you wish to visit with me on any forage related items, please feel free to do so. My address is 298 E. McCormick Avenue, State College, PA. 16801.

Also, may I take this opportunity to wish you and yours the very best of the holiday season. And may 1993 prove to be a prosperous year for you.

Good Weather Equals Good Crops, Better Herd On Dairy

NEWMANSTOWN (Lebanon County) — Good feed obtained because of favorable growing conditions allowed the herd health to improve overall at the farm operated by Bruce Heilinger.

Heilinger, who manages 35 head of all-registered Brown Swiss (and 30 replacement stock), milks from stanchion barn to pipeline.

He also manages 15 milking Holstein and four milking Guern-

sey cows. Averages for the different breeds are, Brown Swiss, 19,000 lbs., Holstein 23,000 lbs., and Guernsey 16,000 lbs.

Heilinger's sister Karen and their parents, Richard and Josephine, help on the farm. They manage about 170 tillable acres and rent an additional 160 acres.

Because of the fine weather and optimum growing conditions in the county, the herd benefitted, according to Heilinger.

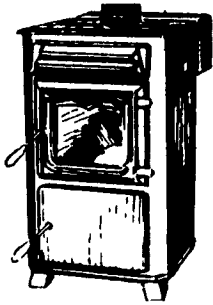
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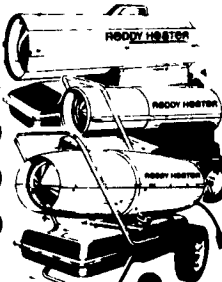
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