

(Continued from Page 1)

ers Contest sponsored by PFGC back in the 1980s. That contest provided alfalfa growers with valuable information that pushed productivity to a higher level.

I thought it would be interesting to look back to 1987, using information that producers supplied to the Pennsylvania Agriculture Statistics Service in Harrisburg, and examine the changes in alfalfa production.

Many of you are completing the 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture forms this winter, and this is an example of how the information that you provide can be used. Here's a trivia question: which county in Pennsylvania has the most acres of alfalfa?

In 1987, farmers in Pennsylvania harvested 850,000 acres of alfalfa. The average yield was 3.2 tons per acre. An additional 1,180,000 acres of "other" hay was harvested. The average yield from those acres was 2.1 tons.

Several years later in 1990, farmers harvested 810,000 acres of alfalfa with an average yield of 3 tons per acre. The reported "other" hay acreage was 1,090,000 acres, averaging 2.1 tons per acre. In 1996, the acres of alfalfa dropped to 750,000 acres, with a state average yield of 3.1 tons.

Using the information that alfalfa growers supplied, we can see that alfalfa acreage has declined about 12 percent over the past 10 years. Growers have reported that alfalfa yields have not increased, and total tons of alfalfa hay has declined.

Who is making up for the shortage of alfalfa hay in Pennsylvania? Just look at the prices of alfalfa hay at the hay auctions. I propose that there are more opportunities in this state to produce alfalfa hay and make a profit doing it.

New York's alfalfa acreage has declined at a faster rate, and Pennsylvania now harvests more acres of alfalfa than our neighbor to the north. Since New York and Pennsylvania rank #3 and #4 respectively for numbers of dairy cows, there will always be a good market for alfalfa hay.

Alfalfa hay growers have been increasing their yields during the past 10 years. While the ag statistics do not suggest an increase, I think that the improvements in genetics and better management practices have given growers better harvests. The fact is, most hay growers don't know what their yields are, and are estimating. They may be thinking as they fill out the statistics report, "I only got three cuts this year, that's three tons per

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Growers' Corner is your opportunity to ask questions and share tips that lead to successful forage production and management.

Please send your questions and/or tips to PFGC News, C/O Dr. Marvin Hall, Agronomy Dept., Penn State Univ., University Park, PA 16802.

Question: Why don't we grow cool-season grasses and warm-season grasses in a mixture? This combination would provide forage throughout the summer.

Answer: Several cultural considerations are involved with why this mixture isn't recommended. Most cool-season grasses (orchardgrass,

timothy, etc.) are much faster establishing than warm-season grasses (switchgrass or big bluestem). Therefore, the cool-season grasses will crowd out the warm-season grasses during establishment.

Even if you could get the cool- and warm-season grasses established in a mixture, there is a problem with harvest management. Warm-season grasses begin to grow in the early summer after the cool-season grasses have been growing for some time. The cool-season grasses are ready to harvest for the first time when the warm-season grasses have just grown a little and their root energy reserves are low. Mowing the mixture would weaken or even kill the warm-season grasses. With these difficulties in mind, it would not be wise to plant both cool- and warm-season grasses in a mixture.

acre."

The 1997 Forage Trials Report was recently released. Alfalfa yields in 1997 at Rockspring average from 5.22 tons per acre in a 4-year-old trial to 7.76 tons per acre in a 1-year-old stand. At Landisville, yields went from 6.34 tons per acre to 7.15 per acre.

There is profit producing alfalfa.

The answer to that trivia question; Lancaster County, with 54,500 acres of alfalfa harvested in 1996. Bradford County was second with 36,000 acres.

Hey, go plant some hay this spring!



#1 Yielding Alfalfa

at Penn State University From Barenbrug

BARALFA 54 ALFALFA

Baralfa 54 from BARENBRUG is a synthetic variety selected for exceptional yield and excellent disease resistance. Baralfa 54 is a vigorous high yielding variety with very fast regrowth after cutting. Baralfa 54 displays above average leafiness and is very persistent.

| Variety | 1996 yield | STAND 10/11/96 |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Baralfa 54 | 7.88 | 84.0 |
| 5454 | 7.60 | 84.2 |
| DK 127 | 7.43 | 88.6 |
| Mariner | 7.38 | 86.1 |
| TMF Generation | 7.13 | 86.3 |
| Multiqueen | 7.10 | 80.6 |
| WL324 | 7.08 | 84.6 |
| WL323 | 7.05 | 82.0 |
| Dividend | 6.98 | 81.3 |
| Preferred | 6.97 | 85.8 |
| Magnum IV | 6.93 | 85.4 |
| ABT 405 | 6.91 | 90.7 |
| Haygrazer | 6.89 | 80.9 |
| 5312 | 6.89 | 86.8 |
| WL 332 SR | 6.88 | 82.8 |
| Excalibur II | 6.86 | 84.9 |
| Prism 2 | 6.84 | 85.9 |
| WL 252 HQ | 6.81 | 81.5 |
| Innovator +Z | 6.76 | 83.3 |
| Supercuts | 6.76 | 83.3 |
| Dominator | 6.67 | 84.2 |
| Saranac AR | 6.61 | 81.9 |
| Alfastar | 6.58 | 86.0 |
| Magnum III-Wet | 6.54 | 84.5 |
| Affinity +Z | 6.52 | 85.7 |
| BH330 | 6.40 | 85.5 |
| Grand Mean | 6.95 | 84.3 |
| CV (%) | 4.35 | 4.0 |
| LSD (pm05) | 0.42 | 4.7 |

* Seeded April 20, 1995
 * Yields (tons per acre at 12% moisture)
 * Yields indicated represent the sum of four cuttings
 * Grand mean CV, and LSD values represent 64 total entries
 * Varieties are listed by rank for 1996 yield

CV - Coefficient of variation
 LSD - Least significant difference

Table 9
 1995 alfalfa variety trials-Landisville

Dealers Wanted Please Call
 1-800-435-5296

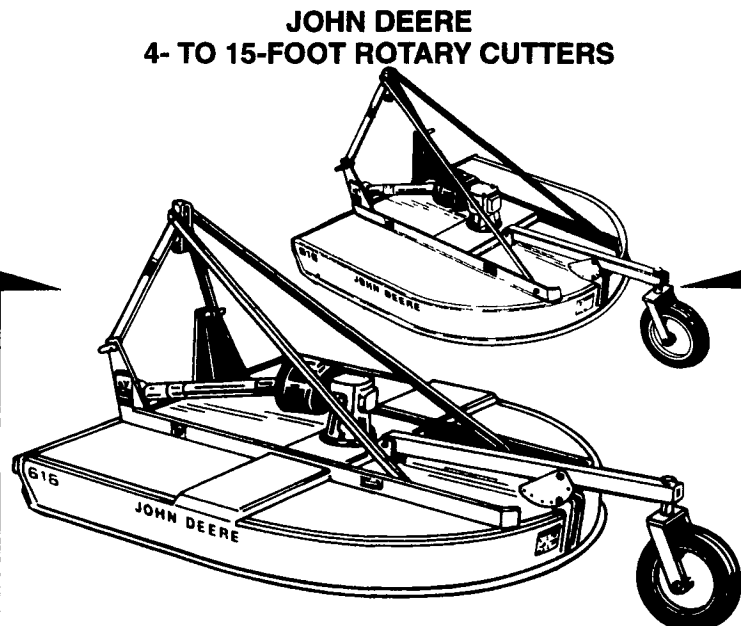
**In Latest 1997 Trials
 Baralfa 54
 Yielded as Much As
 8.07 Tons Per Acre**

**Baralfa 54 is palatable,
 digestible, profitable...
 And PROVEN!**

You will find Baralfa 54 very competitively priced. Baralfa is pre-innoculated & certified. Barenbrug is also a producer of:

- * Barcel & Dovey Tall Fescue
- * BG-34, BG-14, Tetra-Plus Perennial Ryegrass
- * Cambria & Pizza Orchardgrass
- * Improved high yielding Annual Ryegrass
- * Brassica & Turnips
- * Baralfa 321Q Alfalfa
- * White and Red Clovers
- * Horse Master & Stock Master Improved Blends
- * Chicory
- * Custom Blends

Call Barenbrug for more information and nearest distribution center at 1-800-435-5296 or write to:
 Barenbrug Northeast, PO Box 99, Ogdensburg, NJ 07439



JOHN DEERE
 4- TO 15-FOOT ROTARY CUTTERS

SHARP PERFORMERS

► Choose between seven cutters from 4 to 7 feet: 13 Series Economy line for light cutting chores; 16 Series medium-duty cutters; 09 Series for heavy-duty jobs; 717 General Purpose Cutter

► These Unibody™ cutters feature full-frame, continuous seam design for extra strength
 ► Clean-deck design keeps water out; trash buildup on the deck to a minimum

**We Made A
 TRUCKLOAD QUANTITY PURCHASE
 and pass on the Truckload
 Discount to you!**

Hurry in - Pick your size.
 4 Ft. to 15 Ft. Cutters in Stock



Farm Plan
 A Service of FPC Financial
 "The Charge Account for Rural America"

**John Deere Day
 Thursday, Feb. 12
 Parts Discount Up
 To 15%**

LEHIGH AG EQUIPMENT, INC.

6670 Rupperville Road, Allentown, PA 18106

610-398-2553 or 1-800-779-3616

Hours: Mon - Fri 7:00 to 5:30 Saturday 7:30 to 3
 We Ship Parts Same Day To Your Farm



GOOD DEALS...AND A GOOD DEAL MORE