



Crop Watch

For what its worth, we put together (with the help of others) the following spreadsheet to give you a quick glance at crop facts surrounding the current harvest/fall movement and acreage change for this next year. We hope this will be helpful in your spring booking and pricing decisions.

Crop	Yield	Acreage	July-Sept Shipments	Change in Acreage for 2008	Comments
Annual ryegrass	Average	Average	Average	Less	N. Valley reducing acres
Forage per. rye.		Average	Average	No change	
Turf per. rye.	Below Ave.	Average	Average	Less	Major acreage reduction
Forage tall fesc.	Less than '06	Average	Average	More than '06	Minor acreage increases
Turf tall fesc.	Less than '06	Average	Average	More than '06	Minor acreage increases
Orchardgrass	Less than '06	Below Ave.	Average	No Change	
Cr. red fescue	Average	Below Ave.	Below Ave.	Less	
PNW KY blue.	Below Ave.	Below Ave.	Average	Less	
MN KY blue.	Below Ave.	Below Ave.	Below Ave.	Less	Major acreage reduction
MN. per. rye.	Average.	Average	Average	No change	

USDA gets into the "Grass-fed" marketing business

Last week the USDA issued a voluntary standard for grass/forage feed marketing claims. In short, the standard says, "grass and/or forage shall be the feed source consumed for the lifetime of the ruminant animal, with the exception of milk consumed prior to weaning. The diet shall be derived solely from forage and animals cannot be fed grain or grain by-products and must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season."

While this will likely have an overall direct long-term benefit to the grass seed industry, (thanks mostly to the anticipated efforts of marketing agencies who will tout the benefits of grass-feed beef compared to grain-fed beef), the battle has only just heated up between the USDA and the actual producers of grass-fed ruminants.

While one headline read, "USDA limits "grass fed" label to meat that actually is" another read: "USDA Stealing the Term 'Grass Fed'." Some feel it will just be another way for the government to push out the little guy and tax a specialty market, while others are concerned that the standard is not enough. The American Grassfed Association released a position statement that basically thanks the USDA for its efforts, but expresses its disappointment with the content, as they feel it "fails to adequately address ...basic facets, tenets and integrity of Grass Fed animal husbandry" (visit americangrassfed.org for more details.)



Whatever the result, its probably a good time to be in the grass seed business.