

## Downtime Reflections

For a good bit of the US turf and forage industry, this is the time of the year where we assess fall movement, look at our inventories, and turn our focus on spring. Production areas have usually gotten in new plantings, industry folks attend conventions like the Western Seed Association, and many take well-earned vacations. So as we take a bit of a breather, here are a few helicopter-view reflections to consider in your downtime:



- The days of carryover inventory seem to be gone. Whether it be annual ryegrass, KY-31 tall fescue, or Kentucky bluegrass, as an industry, our industry has a difficult time producing sufficient carryover in some key species. This lack of carryover inventory is the main cause of post-harvest shipment and pricing difficulties that seems to have no easy solution. We saw it again this year, where it was a key culprit in multiple price increases and temporary shortages on annual ryegrass, orchardgrass, and KY-31. It was so bad that there were many days this summer in which industry primaries could not offer or price these crops. And looking ahead, at least through next year's harvest, we may face similar challenges.
- On the brighter side, it appears that there are many new, enthusiastic younger people who are entering the seed business. It was commented more than once at this year's Western how many new, young persons were at that meeting. The industry will surely benefit from their fresh ideas and enthusiasm.
- The value of promoting and marketing proprietaries yield good returns. We are seeing more and more proprietary annual ryegrasses - these are sold all the way down the channel with high demand and higher margins. And in other markets dominated by numerous proprietaries, such as turf tall fescue, bluegrass and ryegrass, those few varieties which have value-added and market recognition also maintain high margins and sustained demand.
- Cover crops don't look like they will go away soon. This is still a very immature market full of more questions than answers. By applying the first three observations to this emerging market, we can expect these answers to come from young, vibrant new seedsmen and women who will promote value-added and will also likely find new ways to solve logistics and inventory challenges. Here's to a bright future!

## Roll out the Green Carpet

As mentioned in our last newsletter, we have a new turf-type perennial ryegrass expected to live up to its stately name.

Signet has shown great resistance to gray leaf spot, crown rust, and drought. It has excellent color and turf quality. Signet has been tested through the CTBT trials, North Carolina State overseeding trials, and is currently in the latest NTEP test.

We've attached a tech sheet to better acquaint you with its fine characteristics and updated our website with more data.



**SIGNET**  
TURF-TYPE PERENNIAL RYEGRASS

While Signet is ideal for castles, palaces, mansions, and stately lawns, it is also recommended for all other places where gorgeous, disease-resistant ryegrass is desirable. Supplies are limited for this Spring, so place your order now.

## Let's go to winter school!

Take advantage of winter downtime by learning more about rhizobium, nodulation, and the value of coating through our Nitro-Coat Advantage video class.

In this 12 part video series, Dr Joe Bouton takes us through common questions about rhizobium and inoculation. The short 45 minute white-board presentation is set up for individual viewing on mobile devices, as well as for use in presentation to your sales staff, dealers, and at forage meetings.



Check it out at [smithseed.com/nitro-coat-advantage-series](http://smithseed.com/nitro-coat-advantage-series). It will be well worth your time!