



## Crop Comments

If you've been wondering how the economy, supply, and prices are affecting next year's crop, you might find the following notes useful.

**Creeping Red Fescue:** According to a Canadian Ag report, creeping red fescue seed yields were below average with yields on second year stands described as "very poor". Acres of fescue are "substantially lower than in the past few years and may remain this way for a number of years until growers see better competitive prices. There is a lack of interest in seeding creeping red fescue at this point in time, which is definitely a concern in the seed trade."

**Timothy:** The same report states that timothy seed yields were also "very poor" due to severe drought damage in June. "A number of timothy seed fields ended up being harvested for hay, as hay prices have risen dramatically due to the dry conditions."

**Legumes:** Regarding, clover and alfalfa, the report states that as of this week there are very few legume seed fields harvested. Acres on red and alsike clover "are down substantially from previous years." Seed set on clover and alfalfa "was quite good, "although the crops are very short which may prove difficult to harvest."

**Kentucky Bluegrass:** In Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, bluegrass acres are taking another substantial hit as some companies have decided to not renewing contracts on existing fields. Most contracts have 3-year minimums with 4th-year extensions usually available. This year, due to high priced contracts, good inventories and low demand, these contracts will be cut and acres will be plowed. Some have forecasted that the combined certified acre reductions in the three states will have a net loss of 20,000+ acres as compared to 2008, when there was approximately 49,000 certified acres. Estimated harvestable acres in 2010 will be 45 million lbs, compared to nearly 105 million lbs. back in 2005.

**Tall Fescue, Perennial Ryegrass, and Annual Ryegrass:** In the Willamette Valley, grass seed crops have their own set of challenges this year, and for years to come. Grower price on many crops is near or below the cost of production, and, at present, profitable alternative crop rotations for some are difficult to find, or are coming under their own scrutiny and restrictions. Canola, for instance is a good rotation crop for some, farmers. However, recent state governmental restrictions, due to concerns that canola production will increase pests that might affect cauliflower and broccoli production, may remove this option from the table.

What's the bottom line for an industry that is currently feeling excessive inventories, poor margins, and weak demand? Simply, that it looks like we might not stay this way too long, and the battlefield may quickly reverse to focusing on supply.

## New Forage Fescue

We are pleased to announce that we now have seed available of our newest release, a widely adapted, endophyte-free, high yielding forage tall fescue named Cajun II.

Cajun II is a cross between "European-type" and "Mediterranean-type" genetics, This special

crossing extends Cajun II's range of adaptation and provides it with a wider range of ability to tolerate both the heat and the cold, performing very well both in the Northern and Southern tall fescue zones.

**High Yielding, Early Maturing** - Cajun II's has also been bred to be a high yielder. This is especially noticeable with earlier growth in the spring and extended production in the fall. Cajun II is approximately 11 days earlier than Kentucky 31.

**Endophyte-Free, Horse Safe** - Cajun II is endophyte-free, meaning it is safe for all livestock including horses.

Cajun II has been tested in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. It is currently in trials at Knoxville, TN.

More data is available at [www.smithseed.com](http://www.smithseed.com).



### PENNSYLVANIA TRIAL RESULTS Rock Springs, PA, Sown 4-29-1995

Variety	Tons Dry Matter / Acre				Ground Cover Stand Oct. '98
	1996	1997	1998	3-yr Ave	
Cajun II	7.28	6.26	4.86	6.80	95.8%
Stargrazer	7.16	4.89	4.40	5.54	95.0%
KY-31	6.89	5.48	4.24	5.54	98.0%
Fawn	6.90	4.95	4.55	5.48	95.0%
Barcel	6.91	4.11	5.10	5.37	96.5%
Montebello	6.47	4.81	4.70	5.33	93.8%
Barcarella	6.97	4.88	4.15	5.33	95.0%
Johnstone	6.35	4.84	3.75	4.98	95.8%
LSD 0.05	0.78	0.65	0.86	0.62	6.5%

## Ten Keys to a Profitable Forage Program

**Key #3 - SOIL TEST, THEN LIME AND FERTILIZE AS NEEDED.** This practice, more than any other, affects the level and economic efficiency of forage production. Fertilizing and liming as needed help ensure good yields, improve forage quality, lengthen stand life, and reduce weed problems.- From "Ten Keys to a Profitable Forage Program" - [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/Ten Keys.pdf](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/Ten%20Keys.pdf)